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SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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Jawan assaults IndiGo staffers over luggage

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

SpiceJet on Sunday said a senior Army officer, who was to board a flight to Delhi, assaulted four air-line ground staffers at the Srinagar airport on 26 July, causing a spinal fracture to one of them. An FIR has been registered with the local police and the airline has initiated the process to place the passenger on the no-fly list in accordance with civil aviation regulations, the airline said and added that the assault happened after the passenger was told to pay for the extra cabin baggage. Video clips of the incident shared on social media showed the passenger assaulting the staff and one of them being hit with a queue stand at the airport. *—PTI*

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4 Indians killed in West Virginia car crash

NEW YORK, 3 AUG

In a tragic incident, four senior Indian-origin people were killed in a car crash in West Virginia, author-ities said on Sunday. Kishore Divan, Asha Divan, Shailesh Divan, and Gita Divan were found dead fol-lowing a vehicle crash, Marshal County Sheriff Mike Dougherty said in a state-ment. The four individ-uals were reported missing from Buffalo, New York. Their vehicle was located on 2 August at 9.30pm off a steep embankment along a road in Marshal County, West Virginia. *—PTI*

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EC asks Tejashwi to hand over Voter ID for probe

EC says it isn't official; Denies 6L new voter claim in TN

PATNA/NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

The Election Commission on Sunday asked RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav to hand over a voter ID card he displayed at a press conference, stating the EPIC number he quoted (RAB2916120) does not appear to have been officially issued.

Tejashwi had alleged that his name was missing from the draft electoral rolls published after the first phase of Bihar's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) and claimed his voter ID number had been "changed". However, Patna District Magistrate Thiyagaraja SM clarified that the EPIC number in the rolls matches the one Tejashwi submitted in his 2020 election affidavit — casting doubt on the au-thenticity of the alternate card.

The Sub-Divisional Magistrate of Patna Sadar has formally asked Tejashwi to submit the EPIC card for investigation. NDA leaders have demanded that a case be registered against him for allegedly pos-sessing two voter ID cards, which is a punishable offence under electoral law. They dismissed the Opposition's accusations of "vote-chori" as an excuse in the face of electoral defeat.

The row comes after the Congress alleged that 65 lakh names were dropped in Bihar's draft roll, and Rahul Gandhi claimed his party had an "atom bomb" of evidence to prove vote manipulation.

Separately, the EC fact-checked senior Congress leader P Chidambaram, rejecting his claim that 6.5 lakh names were illegally added in Tamil Nadu, clarifying that the SIR exercise had not yet started in the state.

Tejashwi Yadav had alleged that his name was missing from the draft electoral rolls published after the first phase of SIR *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

INDIA plans protest march

Opposition INDIA bloc parties will hold a dinner meeting on 7 August to plan strategy and stage a protest march to the Election Commission on 8 August.

The Monsoon Session of Parliament has seen repeated disruptions over the issue. TMC MP Derek O'Brien accused the BJP of evading debate, calling SIR "silent invisible rigging". *—PTI*

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The Yellow Line will cater to nearly 8 lakh commuters and ease the notorious Silk Board traffic congestion *PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA*

PM to inaugurate Yellow Line Metro on 10 Aug

BENGALURU, 3 AUG

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Bengaluru on 10 August to inaugurate the Yellow Line of the Namma Metro and lay the foundation stone for Metro Phase-3, BJP MP Tejasvi Surya announced on Sunday.

In a post on 'X', Surya described the visit as a "landmark moment for Bengaluru South," stating that the Yellow Line will cater to nearly 8 lakh commuters and ease the notorious Silk Board traffic con-gestion.

Surya noted that public transport is the only sustainable solution to Bengaluru's traffic woes and said the new infrastructure will benefit nearly 25 lakh people in South Bengaluru. He added that the pro-ject's timely inauguration is the result of Prime Minister Modi's insistence that it be completed without further delay.

Union Urban Affairs Minister Manohar Lal Khattar also confirmed Modi's visit, stating that the PM will lay the foundation stone for the 44.65 km Metro Phase-3 project, estimated at 15,611 crore, during the same visit.

Surya, who recently led a protest demanding the line's opening, hailed the achievement, pointing out that Cabinet approval for Phase-3 came within the first 100 days of Modi's third term. *—PTI*

GET READY TO BOARD THE YELLOW LANE

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No one involved in Odisha girl's burning: Cops

BHUBANESWAR, 3 AUG

Odisha Police on Sunday claimed that no person was involved in the burning of a 15-year-old girl from Balanga, Puri district, who succumbed to her injuries at AIIMS-Delhi on Saturday.

The incident, which occurred on 19 July near the girl's home, initially sparked outrage after her mother alleged in an FIR that three unidentified men abducted her daughter, poured an inflammable substance on her, and set her on fire. The girl was first treated in Bhubaneswar and later airlifted to Delhi for specialised care.

Despite the grave allegations, police have maintained that their investigation has found no evidence of external involvement. In a statement on 'X', Odisha Police said: "The investigation has reached its final stage... no other person is involved. We request the public to refrain from making sensitive comments at this tragic moment."

However, the police did not clarify how the girl caught fire. Following the FIR, senior officers visited the site, and scientific teams and dog squads were deployed. A Special Investigation Team was also formed to probe the matter. The victim's father released an emotional video appeal, stating, "She ended her life due to mental stress... please do not politicise this tragedy. We want peace for our daughter." He also thanked the state government for their support.

His message came amid growing protests and political commentary across Odisha. The incident has raised concerns over safety and sparked calls for a transparent and sensitive investigation. *—PTI*

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The incident occurred on 19 July. The mother alleged that three men abducted her daughter and set her on fire *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

3 terrorists killed as Op Akhal enters day 3

SRINAGAR, 3 AUG

- This takes the total number of terrorists killed in the ongoing operation to six, after three were gunned down by security forces on Saturday.

Three terrorists were killed, and one soldier was injured in Jammu and Kashmir as Operation Akhal, one of the biggest counter-terror exercises this year, entered the third day on Sunday.

This takes the total number of terrorists killed in the ongoing operation to six, after three were gunned down by security forces on Saturday.

"The encounter has entered third day as intermittent exchange of firing has been going on since Sunday morning," an official said.

He said the security forces were using all means, including drones, to track down the terrorists.

Two terrorists have been killed in the encounter which began on Friday after security forces launched a cordon and search operation in a forest area at Akhal in the south Kashmir district, following spe-cific intelligence inputs about the presence of terrorists there.

After an initial exchange of fire between the two sides on Friday evening, the operation was halted for the night, the officials said.

The cordon was strengthened, and additional reinforcements were rushed to the area.

Firing resumed on Saturday morning, during which two terrorists were killed, the officials said.

The identity and group affiliation of the slain terrorists are being ascertained, they added, noting that the operation is still underway. *—PTI*

Security personnel keep a vigil amid an ongoing encounter between security forces and terrorists in in Kulgam on Sunday *PHOTO: PTI*

21-yr-old raped by B'luru PG owner

BENGALURU, 3 AUG

A college student in Bengaluru alleged on Sunday that she was sexually assaulted by the owner of the Paying Guest (PG) facility where she was residing.

The accused, identified as Ashraf, was arrested based on the survivor's complaint at a local police station.

The college student said she had moved into Ashraf's property as a guest less than 10 days ago.

On the night of the alleged attack, around midnight on 2 August, Ashraf reportedly forced himself into her room and told her that food and accommodation would be provided only if she 'cooperated' with him, a term implying sexual favours.

When she refused, Ashraf allegedly forced her into a car, drove to a room, and sexually assaulted her, the complainant stated.

The survivor further alleged that she tried to send her location to a friend but was unable to do so.

The accused eventually dropped her back at the PG, the complainant said, seeking action in the matter.

The survivor has been sent for a medical examination, while Bengaluru police officials have launched an investigation and taken the accused into custody, according to reports.

Notably, just a month ago, another PG owner in Bengaluru was accused of raping a student living on the premises. *—Agencies*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

MEA BINS CLAIMS OF REVIEWING US TARIFF EXEMPTIONS

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has debunked false reports circulating on social media amid the ongoing tariff dispute between India and the United States. Taking to X, the MEA's fact-check unit dismissed claims that India is reviewing US goods exempted from tariffs in retaliation to President Donald Trump's recent decision to impose a 25 percent tariff on Indian imports.

Another report, suggesting that India is considering suspending bilateral agreements with the US if "hostile economic policies" persist, was also categorically denied.

The tariff, which came into effect on 1 August, includes an additional penalty linked to India's oil and military dealings with Russia amid the Ukraine conflict. Announcing the move, Trump criticised India's trade barriers, calling them "among the highest in the world" and labelling them "strenuous and obnoxious." A US delegation is set to arrive in New Delhi on 24 August for the sixth round of trade talks. Trump also lashed out at India and Russia, asking both nations to "take their dead economies and go down together." *—Agencies*

WANDERLUST HITS ORBIT

79-yr-old Indian man flies to space with Blue Origin

BENGALURU, 3 AUG

Arvinder Singh Bahal, 79, became one of the few Indians to travel beyond the Karman line — the boundary 100 km above sea level that marks the edge of space — after flying aboard Blue Origin's NS-34 mission on Sunday, sources said.

Launched by Jeff Bezos' space company as part of its New Shepard space tourism programme, NS-34 carried Bahal and five others on a suborbital journey. He is now among approximately 70 individuals who have flown to space via the programme.

Born on 13 October 1945 in Agra, Bahal grew up near the Taj Mahal before moving to the United States. He is the President of Bahal Properties, a real estate company he founded in 1975.

With a career spanning over 45 years, he has made notable ventures into real estate, hospitality, fashion, and sportswear.

Bahal is also known for his adventurous spirit. He has visited all 196 countries, skydived over Mount Everest and the Pyramids of Giza, travelled to both the North and South Poles, learned to fly helicopters, and holds a private pilot licence. He describes himself as a "lifelong adventurer." Fellow NS-34 crew members included TRON founder Justin Sun, Turkish businessman Gokhan Erdem, Puerto Rican meteorologist Deborah Martorell, British teacher Lionel Pitchford, and venture capitalist JD Russell. *—Agencies*

Agra-born Arvi Bahl traveled to space in Blue Origin's 14th manned flight *PHOTO: BLUE ORIGIN*

Lucky escape for passengers as BMTC bus 'loses brakes'

A BMTC bus rammed into a tree and an electric pole near KR Circle on Sunday due to a suspected brake failure. Fortunately, no injuries were reported

PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Catholics protest arrest of nuns in Chhattisgarh

MYSURU, 3 AUG

Over 500 members of the Catholic community from Mysuru, Mandya, and Chamarajanagar districts held a peaceful protest in Mysuru on Sunday, condemning the alleged illegal arrest of two Christian sisters in Durg, Chhattisgarh. The rally began at Infant Jesus Cathedral, Hinkal, and proceeded to Hinkal Junction before returning to the church. It was inaugurated by Rev. Msgr. Thomas Thennatil, Vicar General of Mandya Diocese. While the sisters have been granted bail, Rev Thennatil demanded full acquittal and called on the government to protect the constitutional rights of minority communities. Fr Sojan Aikarakunnel MST and Fr Augustin Paiampally CMI also addressed the gathering, demanding justice and expressing solidarity. ***—PTI***

Another nursing student ends life at MIMS hostel

MYSURU, 3 AUG

Within 10 days after a student committed suicide by hanging himself from a ceiling fan in a nursing hostel for boys at the Mandya Institute of Medical Sciences (MIMS), another final-year BSC nursing student took her own life on the same campus. According to the police, the deceased has been identified as Nishkala, 21, a resident of Gunnayakanahalli of Mandya district. She hanged herself from a ceiling fan of the girls' hostel on Saturday night. The incident came to light when her roommate found Nishakala hanging in the evening. Bharat, a final-year nursing student, committed suicide in the boys' hostel ten days ago. Police are yet to ascertain what drove the two students to the extreme step. Mandya East police have registered a case.

—Salar News

Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Governor appealed to intervene amid crumbling infra

BENGALURU, 3 AUG

Kiran Jeevan, social work professor and public policy advocate, met the Governor Thawarchand Ghelot at Raj Bhavan today, appealing for urgent intervention to address Bengaluru's crumbling infrastructure. Citing over 1,000 citizen reports, he highlighted the toll of pothole-ridden roads on public health, including injuries, spinal issues, and psychological stress. "This is about dignity and quality of life," he said, stressing his commitment to reform through collaboration. Dr Jeevan submitted a formal letter urging action and expressed hope in reawakening the city's systems. The Governor received the appeal with empathy and assured that the matter would be forwarded to the state government. Jeevan thanked him for his time and support. ***—SALAR NEWS***

CM slams Ram Sene's plot in poisoning school water

CM asks whether Sene Chief will own up in case of deaths

BENGALURU, 3 AUG

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday condemned the alleged poisoning of drinking water at a government school in Hulikatti village, Belagavi district, reportedly aimed at forcing the transfer of a Muslim headmaster.

Calling it a "heinous act" rooted in religious hatred, Siddaramaiah said the accused, identified as Sagar Patil, Taluk President of Shri Ram Sena, and two others, were arrested after deliberately contaminating the school's water supply. The incident occurred around 15 days ago, leaving several children ill, though no casualties were reported.

In a post on 'X', Siddaramaiah stated, "This was a deliberate attempt to remove a headmaster solely because of his faith. It is a grave threat to communal harmony and a terrifying example of how religious fundamentalism can endanger innocent lives."

He criticised Right-wing leaders, asking whether Sri Ram Sena Chief Pramod Mutalik and BJP leaders BY Vijayendra and R Ashoka would take responsibility if there were deaths. "Those who spread hatred in the name of religion for political gain must introspect and atone," he added.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah praised the police for preventing what could have been a 'massacre' ***PHOTO: PTI***

- Investigations revealed the motive was to create unrest and prompt the transfer of the Muslim headmaster. Preliminary inquiries found the water was deliberately poisoned, leading to swift arrests

Police investigations revealed the motive was to create unrest and prompt the transfer of the Muslim headmaster. Preliminary inquiries confirmed that the water was deliberately poisoned, leading to swift arrests.

Siddaramaiah praised the police for preventing what could have been a "massacre" and expressed confidence in the judiciary to deliver justice. He warned that all forms of extremism are dangerous to society and announced a special task force to curb hate speech and communal violence.

Appealing for public support, he said, "We need the people to speak up, file complaints, and stand against such hate. I firmly believe the number of citizens who desire peaceful coexistence far outweighs those who sow division."

All affected children have since recovered. *—PTI*

A FIRST IN COUNTRY

K'taka water bodies to soon have buffer zones based on sizes

BENGALURU, 3 AUG

The Karnataka Tank Conservation and Development Authority (KTCDA) has proposed a scientific revision of buffer zone regulations based on the size of waterbodies, becoming the first state in the country take such an approach.

The KTCDA said, "For the first time in the country, a proposal has been made to scientifically modify buffer zone regulations based on the size of waterbodies in the State."

The move follows representations from elected representatives, including the MLA from Kundapura and the Deputy Commissioner of Udupi, who sought changes in the uniform 30-metre buffer zone rule, citing its disproportionate application to both small and large waterbodies.

Based on its recommendations, the KTCDA has proposed a graded buffer system – zero metre for up to five guntas of water body, three metres buffer zone for water bodies between five guntas and one acre, six metres for lakes above one acre up to 10 acres, 12 metres for lakes above 10 acres up to 25 acres, 24 metres for lakes above 25 acres up to 100 acres and 30 metres for above 100 acres.

The release said, "This buffer distance has been framed using a scientific approach, as the buffer zone serves to facilitate the natural inflow of rainwater into lakes... smaller tanks will have smaller buffers, while larger tanks will have larger buffers."

The proposal also includes revised norms for nala buffers, replacing the existing 30, 15 and 10 metre norms for primary, secondary and tertiary nalas respectively. *—PTI*

Prajwal assigned prisoner number 15528 at City jail

BENGALURU, 3 AUG

A day after being sentenced to life imprisonment in a rape case, suspended JD(S) leader Prajwal Revanna was allotted prisoner number 15528 at Bengaluru's Parappana Agrahara Central Prison, jail authorities confirmed on Sunday.

Prajwal, grandson of former prime minister HD Deve Gowda, spent his first night in jail visibly distressed and reportedly broke down during a medical check-up conducted by prison doctors on Saturday night. He remains under enhanced security in a high-security cell.

The 34-year-old former MP was convicted in one of four rape cases and has approached the High Court to challenge the verdict. The Special Court for MPs/MLAs, presided over by Judge Santosh Gajanan Bhat, pronounced the sentence on Saturday, ordering life imprisonment for the remainder of his natural life and imposing a fine of Rs 11.5 lakh — Rs 11.25 lakh of which is to be paid to the victim.

The case involved a 48-year-old domestic worker employed at the Revanna family's farmhouse in Hassan district, who was raped twice in 2021 — once at the farmhouse and again at their Bengaluru residence. The acts were reportedly recorded on the accused's mobile phone.

Prajwal Revanna ***PHOTO: PTI***

Prajwal was convicted under multiple IPC sections, including 376(2)(k), 376(2)(n), 354A, 354B, 354C, 506, and 201, as well as Section 66E of the IT Act.

His sentence includes two terms of life imprisonment, rigorous imprisonment ranging from two to seven years for other charges, and fines totalling Rs 11.5 lakh. *—PTI*

BJP was never mum on Prajwal case: Pralhad Joshi

HUBBALLI, 3 AUG

Union Minister Pralhad Joshi on Sunday rejected Congress' claims that the BJP remained silent on the Prajwal Revanna rape case due to its alliance with JD(S). "Where have we kept mum? I've already spoken—anyone who commits a crime must face action," Joshi said. Defending BJP's stance, he added, "Even Congress had people accused of heinous crimes." Joshi dismissed Rahul Gandhi's planned protest in Bengaluru on August 5, accusing Congress of blaming EVMs and the Election Commission only when they lose elections, while remaining silent when they win. *—PTI*

Ahead of protest, Cong asks EC help to dig out old plaint

BENGALURU, 3 AUG

Ahead of the Congress party's planned protest on 5 August over alleged voter roll manipulation in Mahadevapura constituency, former minister H Nagesh has written to the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Karnataka, seeking a copy of a complaint he claims was submitted in April 2023.

In a letter dated 31 July, Nagesh stated that the Congress had submitted details of forged entries in the voters' list for Assembly Constituency 174-Mahadevapura. However, he admitted the party no longer had a copy of the original submission and requested the CEO's office to provide it.

In response, Joint CEO Yogeshwar S, in a letter dated 2 August, said no such complaint had been received. "This office does not have records of any such letter received from you during April 2023," he wrote, questioning the timing of the renewed complaint.

He added that certified copies of the electoral roll were provided to all candidates, including Nagesh, and are also publicly accessible online. He further pointed out that Nagesh had not filed any election petition or legal appeal under the Representation of the People Acts of 1950 or 1951.

Preparations underway at Freedom Park with posters and banners ahead of the Congress protest to be led by Rahul Gandhi on 5 August ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

The Congress, alleging large-scale electoral fraud in Mahadevapura and other constituencies during the 2023 Assembly elections, claims thousands of fake names were added and genuine voters removed.

Rahul Gandhi is expected to join the protest in Bengaluru on Monday, which party leaders say aims to highlight electoral malpractice and demand accountability. *—PTI*

Tipu started KRS dam project: Mahadevappa

MYSURU, 3 AUG

Social welfare minister Dr HC Mahadevappa on Sunday said Tipu Sultan was the first to lay the foundation stone for the construction of the Krishnaraja Sagar (KRS) dam in Mysuru district.

The name of Tipu Sultan is mentioned in the welcome arch of the KRS gate as being the first to initiate this project. "People need guts and courage to speak the truth, the history of the KRS," he said after inaugurating Rajarshi Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar Punyasmarana programme in Srirangapatna. *—Salar News*

Dead man's burial delayed for two days over land dispute

KOLAR, 3 AUG

A corpse in Rangenahalli village, Chintamani, was kept waiting for over two days before finally being buried on Sunday. Family members of Kodandappa, who died on Friday, were intending to bury the body on the land at Survey No 8, where previous relatives were laid to rest. However, this land is now claimed by a family from a neighbouring village.

Kodandappa's relatives insisted on burying him on the same land and sought permission from revenue authorities. The officials refused,

PHOTO: ANI

stating the land belonged to someone else. With no designated cremation ground in Rangenahalli, the family kept the body at their home, refusing to bury it elsewhere despite repeated requests from authorities.

On Sunday, Tahasildar Sudarshan Yadav and revenue officials surveyed the village and allocated 10 guntas of government land for a graveyard. They also identified another 20 guntas in nearby Nandanahosahalli village as an alternative site. Despite these options, the family remained adamant about using Survey No. 8 land and threatened to donate the body to a medical college if denied.

Eventually, after persuasion from villagers, the family agreed to bury Kodandappa on their own land. This incident highlights the need for proper cremation facilities in the village to avoid similar distress in the future. *—Salar News*

DKS seeks 'advocate banks' to safeguard voters' rights

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Thursday called for the creation of "advocate banks" in every constituency to protect voter and party worker rights, in line with the vision of Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge.

Speaking at an AICC event on 'Constitutional Challenges: Pathways and Perspectives', Shivakumar emphasised the need to uphold the Constitution and democracy. "Congress' history is the country's history. We must stand ready to protect it," he said.

He recalled his political journey, crediting Rajiv Gandhi for giving him his first ticket and expressing gratitude to senior advocates and Sonia for their support during his Tihar Jail stint. "Sonia's visit to jail was a symbol of loyalty to party workers," he said.

Shivakumar stressed the Gandhi family's legacy, noting Sonia's decision to forgo the Prime Minister's post as a rare act of sacrifice. *—Salar News*

Students protest poor food, hostels in CM's constituency

MYSURU, 3 AUG

Hundreds of students at the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Residential School and Science College in Tagadur protested over the weekend, alleging that the food served in their hostel was often stale, worm-infested and contained cockroaches and insects. The hostel is located in the Varuna Assembly constituency, represented by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

The protest began on Saturday night and continued into Sunday after repeated complaints to the school principal and government officials yielded no response. Students accused the hostel management of ignoring the government-recommended menu and serving unhygienic meals regularly.

Around 580 students from Class 6 to Second PUC stay on the residential campus. They raised slogans against Principal Vasanthakumari, hostel warden Mahadevappa, and guest lecturer Guruswamy, demanding their immediate suspension for alleged mismanagement and negligence.

Protesters also highlighted the lack of basic facilities. Their demands included clean drinking and utility water, proper maintenance, mesh screens for windows, and the renovation of outdated libraries. Safety concerns were also flagged.

"The problems have continued for over six months, and nothing has been done," said a student leader.

The protesting students urged CM Siddaramaiah to visit the campus personally to take stock of the situation and ensure immediate action. *—Salar News*

DIAGNOSIS BEFORE SYMPTOMS

Deep-tech startup claims leap in cancer care

BENGALURU, 3 AUG

A City-based deep-tech startup is leveraging quantum technology to detect cellular damage even before the symptoms appear, in just hours, possibly changing the game for cancer care.

The "predictive tech" of Quantum Biosciences Private Limited, one of the 20-odd exhibitors at the recently concluded Quantum India Bengaluru Summit, uses quantum biosensors to detect unique 'magnetic fingerprints' of oxidative stress in cells, allowing detection of tissue injury.

When somebody close to him was diagnosed with cancer and had to undergo radiation therapy, Quantum Biosciences Managing Director Ravi Puvvala, who was earlier developing sensors for automotive industry, started exploring the possibility of using sensors to predict radiation-induced cardiotoxicity before irreversible damage.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

"Radiation therapy is essential for treating cancer. However, it kills not only the cancerous cells, but also the good ones. This leads to long-term complications such as fatigue, cognitive decline, organ dysfunction and secondary cancers. It also potentially induces a heart disease or fibrosis." Puvvala said.

Existing diagnostic tools, such as MRI, PET scans and blood biomarkers only detect harm after significant damage has already occurred, said Puvvala. "So, I wanted to use my experience in building sensors, and, you know, explore technology, understand how to optimise this particular problem," he said.

Things took a quantum leap when he partnered with the Netherlands-based QT Sense, led by another Banglorean, Deepak Veeregowda. QT Sense was formed to take forward the 15 years of academic research done in this area at the University of Groningen. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Didi slams Delhi police over language row

KOLKATA, 3 AUG

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamta Banerjee on Sunday lashed out at the Delhi Police for referring to the Bengali language as "Bangladeshi national language" in a purported letter, alleging that it was "insulting, anti-national and unconstitutional". The letter, linked to an investigation of a case under the 'Foreigners' Act', was written to the officer-in-charge of Banga Bhawan, the official guest house of the Delhi government. TMC supremo described the Centre as anti-Bengali and urged all to stage protests against such "anti-Constitutional language to insult and humiliate Bengali-speaking people of India". She also said that Bengali is not only her mother tongue but also the language of Rabindranath Tagore and Swami Vivekananda. *—PTI*

Man held for bomb threat targeting Gadkari

NAGPUR, 3 AUG

Police in Nagpur arrested a man on Sunday for making a hoax bomb threat targeting Union Minister Nitin Gadkari's residence. The call was made to the police control room via emergency number 112, prompting a swift security response. The call was traced to Umesh Vishnu Raut, a resident of Tulsi Bagh Road. He was detained from the Dawakhana premises using mobile location tracking and later formally arrested by the crime branch. Raut, who is employed at a country liquor shop, allegedly issued the false threat without any actual explosives being involved. A case has been registered, and further investigation is underway. *—PTI*

Jharkhand Edu Minister on life support

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

Jharkhand Education Minister Ramdas Soren, who is undergoing treatment at a private hospital here, continues to be critical, a source said on Sunday. The 62-year-old JMM leader was airlifted to Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals on Saturday in the national capital from Jamshedpur after he fell in the washroom at his residence. According to the source, he has been on life support since Saturday, and a multidisciplinary team of senior specialists was closely monitoring his condition. Chief Minister Hemant Soren visited him at Delhi, and enquired his doctors about the minister's condition. "Respected Ramdas Da has been a leading warrior of the Jharkhand movement. Through struggle, he has always overcome every challenge, and this time too, he will emerge victorious," he said on X. *—PTI*

6 held in Nuh for 'defaming' Congress MLA

GURUGRAM, 3 AUG

Six people were booked in Nuh here for allegedly posting "defamatory" content against Congress's Ferozpur Jhirka MLA Mamman Khan, police said on Sunday. An FIR was filed on Friday at the Nagina Police Station on the complaint of the MLA's brother, Mustkeem Khan, in connection with the matter. Three of the six accused have been identified so far. As it happened, Mamman Khan had raised the matter of slaughterhouses in Mewat. On Friday, some people protested at the Nuh grain market against illegal slaughterhouses, and criticised Mamman Khan on social media. "We have registered an FIR against six persons and are investigating the matter. The accused will be arrested soon," Nagina Police Station SHO Praveen Kumar said. *—PTI*

Stalin: True AIADMK cadre unhappy with BJP alliance

Stalin accused the NDA-led Centre of betraying Tamil Nadu

CHENNAI, 3 AUG

Ruling DMK president and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Sunday hit out at his party's archival, the AIADMK for renewing ties with the BJP, claiming 'true' workers of the party were not happy with the alliance.

The ruling BJP at the Centre "betrayed Tamil Nadu", and despite this, AIADMK Chief Edappadi K Palaniswami (EPS) forged ties with the saffron party for the 2026 Assembly polls and was now "spreading lies" during his ongoing statewide campaign, he charged.

In a letter to party workers ahead of the seventh death anniversary of his father and former CM M Karunanidhi, Stalin urged the DMK workers and supporters to uphold the pro-Tamil and pro-Tamil Nadu values propagated by the late leader.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK supremo MK Stalin PHOTO: PTI

In non-BJP ruled states and where the party had no chance of capturing power, the BJP was engaging in activities against the elected governments through Governors and it was the DMK government which undertook a legal battle and succeeded over the issue of Governor approving state Bills, he said.

"At a time when such battles have to be taken forward with more vigour, the AIADMK, which has no concern for Tamil Nadu, has aligned with the BJP, which betrays the state."

"Leader of Opposition (EPS), who lacks any basic principles, went all the way to Delhi, knelt before the BJP and forged an alliance. Even true AIADMK workers are unhappy over this," Stalin charged.

Recalling the various pro-people and pro-language initiatives of his father-led regimes in the past, Stalin said his present government was walking the path, to ensure the rights of the State and its people.

On the late leader's seventh death anniversary, Stalin said a peace march would be taken out here towards his Marina memorial and exhorted party workers to pay respects to the Dravidian stalwart in their respective districts. *—PTI*

Tahir was gunned down during Operation Mahadev in Srinagar's Harwan area on 28 July, 2025 PHOTO: PTI

Pakistan's link to Pahalgam attack 'exposed' at PoK funeral

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

In a fresh indication of Pakistan's involvement in the 22 April Pahalgam terror attack, the funeral of Habib Tahir—one of the militants killed by Indian forces—was held last week in Kuiyaan village, Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK).

Tahir, affiliated with the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), was gunned down alongside two others during Operation Mahadev in Srinagar's Harwan area on 28 July, confirmed Srinagar SSP GV Sundeep Chakravarty.

The Resistance Front (TRF), an LeT offshoot recently designated a terrorist group by the US, claimed responsibility for the Pahalgam attack that killed 26 tourists, including a Nepali national.

Tensions flared at Tahir's funeral when armed LeT commander Rizwan Hanif arrived uninvited.

His nephew allegedly threatened mourners, sparking outrage. The group was ultimately forced to leave.

Sources revealed the Pakistan Army had earlier attended funerals of LeT terrorists killed in Operation Sindoor.

In May, India released names of top Pakistani officials present at such events, including Abdul Rauf, a US-designated global terrorist.

Despite Pakistan's claim that LeT is "defunct," Indian officials confirmed Pahalgam attackers trained at LeT's Muridke base—infamously known as the country's "terror nursery." *—Agencies*

GADKARI LAUNCHES RS 5,233 CRORE ROAD PROJECTS

AMARAVATI, 3 AUG

Union Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari laid the foundation for 27 road projects and inaugurated two major National Highway schemes worth Rs 5,233 crore in Andhra Pradesh. Accompanied by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Gadkari emphasised the importance of infrastructure, stating, "In any country and kingdom, four things are very important for development—water, power, transportation and communication. You will get prosperity from roads." The projects include the upgrade of the Madanapalle-Pileru stretch of NH 71 into a four-lane corridor, built at Rs 1,994 crore, and a 31km upgrade from Kurnool on NH 340C to Mandlem, costing Rs 858 crore. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

BIHAR SIR

6.5 lakh voters added in TN, claims Chidambaram

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

Amid the raging row over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar, senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Sunday alleged that the Election Commission is trying to change the electoral character and patterns of states, and asserted that this "abuse of powers" must be fought politically and legally.

The former home minister said the Bihar voter revision exercise is getting more and more curious.

While 65 lakh Bihar voters are in danger of being disenfranchised, reports of 'adding' 6.5 lakh persons as voters in Tamil Nadu is alarming and patently illegal, Chidambaram posted on X.

"Calling them 'permanently migrated' is an insult to the migrant workers and a gross interference in the right of the electorate of Tamil Nadu to elect a government of its choice," he said.

"Does not the migrant worker return to Bihar during Chhath puja festival?"

Why migrant workers shouldn't return to their home state to vote, Chidambaram asked.

P Chidambaram PHOTO: PTI

Meanwhile, the BJP alleged on Sunday that RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav has committed a crime by keeping two voter IDs, noting that the EPIC number he cited at a presser was different from the one he officially carries.

BJP sharpened its attack on Tejashwi a day after the EC refuted his claim that his name was missing from the draft electoral rolls in Bihar. "The Congress and RJD have been thoroughly exposed... Did you (Yadav) lie under oath? Did you present wrong facts to the EC". *—PTI*

No 'arbitrary changes' in birth docus: WB

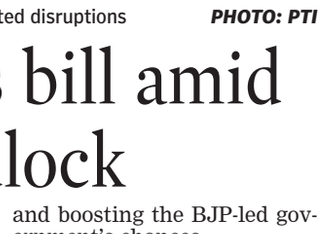
KOLKATA, 3 AUG

The West Bengal Health Department has announced new, stringent rules prohibiting arbitrary changes to birth and death certificates, aiming to prevent misuse and ensure record accuracy.

Individuals can only modify details such as names or dates with proper documentation, subject to sole approval of registrar, whose decision is final.

Minor corrections, like typographical errors or slight discrepancies in dates or place of birth, may be rectified if supported by valid proof, including Aadhaar, Voter ID, or PAN card. For surname changes, an affidavit from a First Class Judicial Magistrate and a school admission certificate are required.

The guidelines, based on the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969, also specify



that once a father's name is registered, it cannot be altered in cases of divorce or remarriage, to prevent legal complications during school admissions & identity verification.

Meanwhile, political tensions rose in WB after BJP criticised CM over her announcement of a Rs 1.1 lakh grant for Durga Pujas.

BJP's Agnimitra Paul accused government of prioritising religious politics over development, stating, "Instead of building roads and creating employment, she is busy doing politics of religion." *—PTI*

R'than min says when CM prays, it always rains

JAIPUR, 3 AUG

Rajasthan Minister of State for Industry and Commerce, KK Vishnoi sparked controversy by attributing waterlogging and pollution in Balotra, Barmer district, to divine intervention.

Vishnoi said, "Every time the chief minister offers prayers to Lord Krishna, it rains so heavily that he is compelled to request Lord Indra to slow it down."

The Congress criticised his comments, calling them "ridiculous" and accusing him of shifting blame for a man-made crisis onto gods. Balotra faces ongoing issues with polluted water from the Jojari river, which overflows during monsoon, inundating villages with foul-smelling, contaminated water from industrial waste.

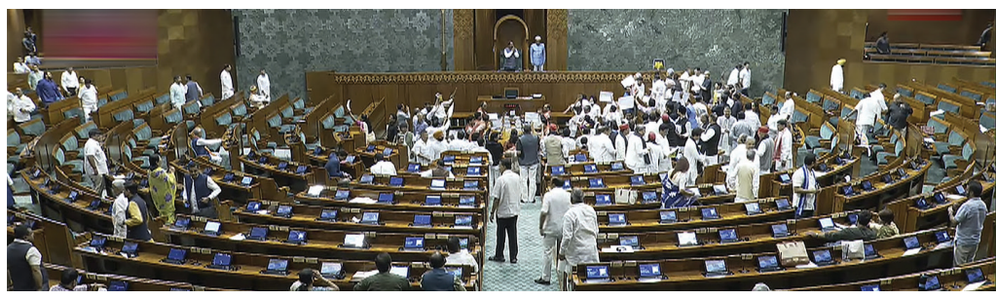
Congress MLA Harish Choudhary said, "The minister has diverted the real issue and implied that only prayers can help".

Locals have protested, with many forced to evacuate homes due to health hazards and flooding. *—PTI*

UP BJP chief after national prez polls

LUCKNOW, 3 AUG

Speculation continues over the appointment of a new Uttar Pradesh BJP president, with party insiders suggesting the process may only commence after the election of the national party leader. Previously believed to precede the national election, sources now indicate the sequence will be reversed, as the quorum for the national process has been met. A senior BJP leader confirmed it and said, "A clear message has been sent to aspirants from UP to continue working on the ground." *—PTI*



Since the Monsoon Session began on 21 July, Parliament has witnessed repeated disruptions PHOTO: PTI

Centre to push sports bill amid Parliament deadlock

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

Parliament is expected to remain deadlocked on Monday as the government plans to push the passage of the National Sports Governance Bill in the Lok Sabha. The bill, aimed at enhancing transparency in the functioning of sports bodies, has been listed for consideration and passage amid continuing Opposition protests.

Meanwhile, the Rajya Sabha is set to take up a resolution from Home Secretary Amit Shah to extend President's Rule in Manipur for six more months. Since the Monsoon Session began on 21 July, Parliament has witnessed repeated disruptions. The Opposition has demanded a debate on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar, alleging the Election Commission is deliberately disenfranchising voters sympathetic to their bloc and boosting the BJP-led government's chances.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said it is up to the House Speakers to permit discussions, citing past rulings that bar debates on autonomous constitutional bodies. Despite ongoing uproar, the government is likely to advance key legislation if disruption continues. Another bill listed is the National Anti-Doping (Amendment) Bill. *—PTI*

MALEGAON BLAST CASE

Was tortured by cops to blame Yogi, RSS Chief: Upadhyay

BALLIA, 3 AUG

Major Ramesh Upadhyay (retd), recently acquitted by a special NIA court in the 2008 Malegaon bomb blast case, claimed on Sunday that he was tortured in jail to falsely implicate Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat and RSS leader Indresh Kumar in the case.

Upadhyay said that their names were repeatedly mentioned by police during interrogations.

"From the first day, I knew I was innocent. I even volunteered for NARCO and polygraph tests thrice, but the ATS never submitted the reports to court," he said.

Upadhyay, a native of Ram Nagar village in Ballia district, was arrested on 28, October 2008, four days after he was detained.

He said he faced severe physical and mental torture from the moment he was taken into custody.

RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat, UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath PHOTO: PTI

"I was kept in solitary confinement for years. Officials pressured me to name political and spiritual leaders in exchange for leniency and early release," he alleged.

PUROHIT GETS WARM WELCOME

Meanwhile, in Pune, Lieutenant Colonel Prasad Purohit, one of the seven accused acquitted by a court in the 2008 Malegaon bomb blast case, was accorded a grand welcome by his family members and supporters.

As Purohit returned to Pune on Sunday, several people, including his friends, family, supporters, members of various right-wing organisations and others gathered outside the Shantisheela Housing Society located on the Law College Road, where he lives, to receive him and to celebrate his acquittal. *—PTI*

PM, Shah meet Prez amid trade tension

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan on Sunday, amid ongoing parliamentary deadlock over the Opposition's demand for a discussion on Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise in Bihar. The meeting, which lasted until 1.39pm, comes days after US President Donald Trump announced 25 per cent tariffs on Indian exports due to purchases of Russian military equipment and oil. Later that evening, Union Home Minister Amit Shah also called on the President. The reasons for the consecutive meetings remain unclear, with the Rashtrapati Bhavan only stating, "Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi called on President Droupadi Murmu" and "Shri Amit Shah called on President Droupadi Murmu". *—PTI*

President Droupadi Murmu being greeted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a meeting at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi PHOTO: PTI

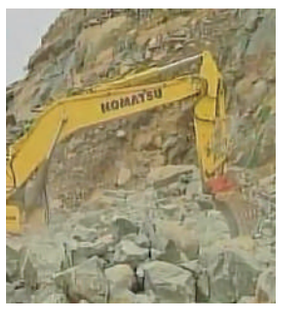


PHOTO: PTI

6 workers killed in granite quarry accident in Andhra

BALLIKURAVA, 3 AUG

Six migrant workers were killed and three injured after a massive granite rock fell on them at a quarry in Bapatla district on Sunday. The incident occurred when 10 to 15 workers were engaged in mining works. Water seepage was suspected to have caused the rock to give way, police said. Forensic teams were investigating the site. Rescue operations were immediately launched, with mining department officials joining the police at the site. Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu expressed grief over the tragedy and instructed officials to ensure medical treatment to the injured. YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy Reddy the government to provide immediate support and assistance to the families of the deceased.—*PTI*

Doctors' strike at AIIMS continue, services affected

PATNA, 3 AUG

Healthcare services at AIIMS-Patna remain disrupted as resident doctors strike for the third day over Sheohar MLA Chetan Anand's alleged high-handed behaviour. The Resident Doctors Association (RDA) held a meeting with hospital officials, demanding transparency and the immediate release of CCTV footage. They also sought legal support and the installation of CCTV cameras in critical areas within 72 hours. They demanded the quashing of a "false FIR" against a doctor and calls for the invocation of Arms Act sections due to weapons present on site. The RDA accused the MLA, his wife, and armed guards of forcibly entering the hospital, assaulting security staff, threatening doctors, and brandishing a firearm. —*PTI*

Students eat meal licked by dog, given anti-rabies

BALODABAZAR, 3 AUG

A total of 78 students from a government-run school in Chhattisgarh's Balodabazar district were administered anti-rabies vaccine after they ate mid-day meals contaminated by a stray dog, an official has said. The incident occurred on 29 July at Government Middle School in Lachchhanpur under Palari block, and a probe is underway, he said on Saturday. "A stray dog contaminated cooked vegetables that were to be served to school students as part of their mid-day meal. Some of the students informed the teachers about the incident. Teachers had asked the self-help group that cooked the food not to serve it, but they went ahead, claiming it was not contaminated," he said—PTI

Assam man 'beaten up' by BSF personnel, dies

SILCHAR, 3 AUG

A man died after allegedly being thrashed by a few Border Security Force (BSF) personnel in Assam's Cachar district, triggering protests by locals. The incident took place on 31 July near the India-Bangladesh border in Katigorah, and the man succumbed to his injuries at the Silchar Medical College and Hospital. A large number of people protested in front of the local circle office, demanding strict action against the culprits. The man, identified as Nirmol Namasudra, 30, hailed from Amtoli village. The family of the deceased has not filed any complaint against the BSF personnel and no case has been registered yet. The BSF was not available for comment on the allegation.—*PTI*

Uneasy calm in deceased Odisha girl's village

People remain indoors a day after teen dies due to burns

BHUBANESWAR, 3 AUG

An uneasy calm prevailed in Bayabar village in Odisha's Puri district on Sunday, with most of the villagers staying indoors, a day after the 15-year-old girl succumbed to her burn injuries at AIIMS Delhi.

Police personnel stood guard near the deceased girl's house, as most of the family members had left for Delhi, where the postmortem examination will be conducted.

The girl's mother and her aunt, who were present at the house in Nuagopalpur bustee, were also missing since Saturday, a neighbour said.

Some people of the community dug a pit near the village, where the girl's body would be put to rest.

"We are keeping a watch on the village and the movement of the people..." a policeman said. Dukhishyam Senapati, the villager, who first doused fire on the body of the girl, also kept to the indoors.

The girl who was airlifted from AIIMS Bhubaneswar to AIIMS, Delhi, with over 70 per cent burn injury, died on 1 August.

Meanwhile, the girl's father in a video, said that his daughter had taken her life as she was mentally under pressure.

Odisha police claimed that no one is involved in the burning of the girl, even as her mother in her FIR, had alleged that there three people abducted her daughter and set her on fire.

However, Odisha police was yet to say how the girl was set on fire.

Opposition BJD and Congress criticised the Odisha government and raised questions on the "role" of police over its claim.

The Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee demanded that the police nab the culprits within seven days or the party would gherao the DGP office. —*PTI*

The father of the victim, who was sent on fire by three miscreants in a village in Odisha. She died on 1 August at AIIMS-Delhi PHOTO: ANI

Commuters move through a waterlogged road after heavy rainfall, in Patna on Sunday PHOTO: PTI

Rains cause floods in Bihar

PATNA/KOLKATA/ JALPAIGURI/SHIMLA, 3 AUG

The water levels in several rivers in Bihar have risen due to heavy rain in the last 24 hours, officials said on Sunday. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar directed all officials concerned to remain alert.

According to the latest district-wise rainfall bulletin issued by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) on Sunday, "Light to moderate rain was recorded in many districts, including Patna, Banka, Muzaffarpur, Begusarai, Bhagalpur, Bhojpur, Buxar, Gayaji, Jehanabad, Kaimur, Katihar, Khagaria, Munger, Nalanda and Vaishali since 2 August."

Rivers in northern West Bengal, including the Teesta and Jaldhaka, are also in a spate after incessant rain inundated low-lying areas and affected road connectivity to Sikkim and Kalimpong, even as the Met forecast very heavy downpour in the region.

The IMD has forecast very heavy rain with isolated extremely heavy downpour in the northern districts till Tuesday.

Moderate to heavy rains that began on Saturday evening continued to lash parts of Himachal Pradesh, resulting in the closure of 307 roads, including two national highways on Sunday, officials said.

The IMD has issued an orange alert for heavy to very heavy rains in isolated areas of the state on Monday and Tuesday. All officials were asked to remain alert. —*PTI*

MINING IN U'KHAND CAUSE DISASTERS: GOVT

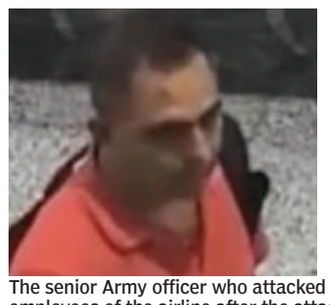
NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

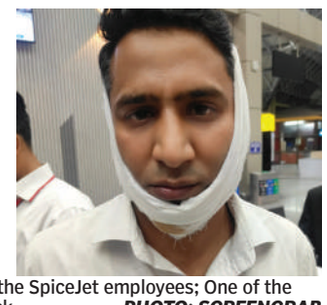
A government-appointed panel has warned that unscientific mining in Uttarakhand's Bageshwar district is destabilising slopes, threatening villages and agriculture besides disrupting water sources in the fragile Himalayan region.

The report, submitted to the National Green Tribunal (NGT) on 30 July, called for sweeping reforms in mining practices and stringent monitoring to mitigate the risks. The assessment was conducted following rising complaints of landslides, cracks in houses, drying springs and crop losses in several villages around Bageshwar.

The panel examining the mines have reported that most mines have altered natural slopes through steep vertical cuts and lack proper benches, making the terrain highly "vulnerable to landslides" and rock-falls.

The assessment was conducted following rising complaints of landslides, cracks in houses, drying springs and crop losses in several villages in Bageshwa, Kanda and Dugnakuri. —*PTI*





The senior Army officer who attacked the SpiceJet employees; One of the employees of the airline after the attack PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

Army officer assaults SpiceJet staffers

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

SpiceJet on Sunday said a senior Army officer, who was to board a flight to Delhi, assaulted four airline ground staffers at the Srinagar airport on July 26, and one of them suffered a spinal fracture.

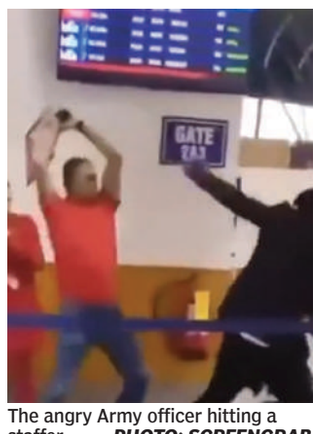
An FIR was registered with the police and the airline initiated the process to place the passenger on the no-fly list in accordance with civil aviation regulations. The assault happened after the passenger was told to pay for the extra cabin baggage.

Viral video clips of the incident showed the passenger assaulting the staff and one of them being hit with a queue stand at the airport.

The injured were taken to the hospital and are undergoing treatment.

One employee reportedly collapsed unconscious on the floor, but the passenger continued kicking and hitting him.

Another staff member bled from the nose and mouth after receiving a forceful kick to the jaw while assisting his unconscious colleague.



The angry Army officer hitting a staffer PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

The senior Army officer was carrying two pieces of cabin baggage weighing a total of 16 kilogrammes, more than double the permitted limit of 7 kilogrammes.

When he was asked to pay for the extra baggage, he refused and forcefully entered the aerobridge without completing the boarding process.

SpiceJet wrote to the civil aviation ministry, requesting appropriate action against the passenger. —*PTI*

11 killed in accident in UP

People stand near the Saryu canal after an SUV fell in it, leaving 11 people dead and four injured, in Uttar Pradesh' Gonda on Sunday PHOTO: PTI

GONDA, 3 AUG

A tragic accident occurred in Gonda on Sunday when an SUV plunged into the Saryu canal, claiming the lives of 11 people and leaving four others injured. The victims were en route to the Prithvinath Temple in Khargupur from Sihagaon village when the incident took place near Belwa Bahuta.

According to Station House Officer Krishn Gopal Rai, the SUV was carrying 15 people, including the driver. Eleven bodies were retrieved with the aid of villagers and rescue teams.Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed deep sorrow, offering Rs 2 lakh to each victim's family and Rs 50,000 for the injured. "Deeply saddened by the loss of lives," he said on X. UP CM Yogi Adityanath also announced Rs 5 lakh assistance to the deceased's families.Eyewitnesses cited slippery roads due to morning rain as the cause. —*PTI*

RIGHT-WINGERS THREATEN PASTOR

WAYANAD, 3 AUG

A case has been registered after a group of right-wing activists allegedly threatened a pastor over accusations of religious conversion.

The police initiated the action on their own, without a formal complaint.

Sources said the incident is believed to have taken place a few months back, and the case was registered on Saturday based on a video circulated on social media platforms in this regard.

In the purported footage aired by local media, a group of people can be seen confronting the pastor and issuing threats of physical harm.

According to the FIR registered by the Sultan Bathery police, the accused had tried to threaten a person alleging religious conversion, videographed the incident, and circulated it on social media platforms with the intention of destroying the peaceful atmosphere existing in the society.

The case was registered under various sections of the BNS including 192 (wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot),

351 (3) (criminal intimidation to cause death or grievous hurt) and 3 (5) (an offense committed by several people with a common intention).

An investigation is on to identify the accused persons seen in the video, sources added.

The police said that they are trying to nab them. —*PTI*

NEET-PG exam conducted in 301 cities

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

More than 2,42,000 candidates on Sunday appeared for the NEET-PG exam, which is conducted by the National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) for admission to various post graduate medical courses.

The exam was conducted in a single shift across 301 cities and in 1,052 test centres, sources said. This is the largest computer-based exam in India – in terms of number of candidates – conducted in a single shift.

The NBEMS had engaged more than 2,200 faculty members from various medical colleges and accredited hospitals to ensure zero tolerance towards use of unfair means cases. NBEMS took assistance from the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre, Ministry of Home Affairs, to prevent any kind of cyber scam at the test centres. —*PTI*

A National Eligibility Entrance Test aspirant removes her earings amid security checking before entering an examination centre PHOTO: PTI

Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train India's 1st

BHAVNAGAR, 3 AUG

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Sunday said India's first bullet train service will commence very soon, and it will cut the travel time between Mumbai and Ahmedabad to two hours and seven minutes.

The Union minister was at Bhavnagar terminus from where he virtually flagged off the Ayodhya Express, Rewa-Pune Express, and Jabalpur-Raipur Express. "The first bullet train from Mumbai to Ahmedabad will start very soon, and the work on the project is going on at a fast pace," Vaishnaw said. He shared details on other projects.—*PTI*

ELEPHANT ON REHAB

Locals want jumbo back from Vantara

KOLHAPUR, 3 AUG

Thousands of people participated in a 'silent march' in Kolhapur on Sunday, demanding that 36-year-old female elephant Mahadevi (also called Madhuri), be brought back from Vantara wildlife rescue, treatment, and rehabilitation centre in Gujarat's Jamnagar district.

Former MP Raju Shetty led the march from Nandani to the district collectorate, where a memorandum was given to the authorities to facilitate the elephant's return.

Vantara officials assured that they will cooperate in efforts to bring Mahadevi back to Nandani, State Health Minister Prakash Abitkar had said.

Mahadevi, who was with the Shri Jinsen Bhattarak Pattacharya Mahaswami Jain 'math' (monastery) at Nandani for over three decades, was relocated to Vantara's Radhe Krishna Temple Elephant Welfare Trust earlier this week following a Bombay High Court ruling.

The order, upheld by the Supreme Court, was passed after concerns raised by an NGO with the Maharashtra Forest Department and the Supreme Court's high-powered committee on her deteriorated health and psychological suffering.

BJP MP Dhananjay Mahadik on Thursday met Union Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Bhupender Yadav and submitted a memorandum for bringing back Mahadevi to the Jain monastery.

Mahadevi allegedly killed the chief priest in 2017 by repeatedly slamming him against a wall.

She suffers from foot rot, overgrown toenails, arthritis, and stereotypic behaviour such as constant head bobbing. The Vantara facility offers hydrotherapy and veterinary care. —*PTI*

Mahadevi was taken to Vantara in Gujarat for rehabilitation PHOTO: ANI

Kerala's 'two-rupee doctor' no more

KANNUR, 3 AUG

AK Rairu Gopal, renowned for charging just Rs 2 for treatment over fifty years, died on Sunday due to age-related illnesses.

The 80-year-old, known as the 'people's doctor' and 'two-rupee doctor', treated thousands from 4am to 4pm daily at his clinic, 'Lakshmi', in Kannur.

He was also known for providing free medicines to those unable to afford them. Due to health issues, he reduced his hours to 6am to 4pm. He finally closed his clinic in May 2024 due to age related ailments.Family sources said his passing has shocked the region's poor patients. The cremation will be held at Payyambalam.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan expressed condolences, stating, "For half a century, he had been charging only two rupees for his consultation. His willingness to serve people was a great relief to poor patients." —*PTI*

AK Rairu Gopal PHOTO: ANI

ANCIENT HINDU IDOLS IN J&K

Ancient Hindu idols were recovered during an excavation work for the renovation of a spring in Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag district. The idols were recovered at Karkoot Nag in the Salia area of Aishmuqam in south Kashmir. The site holds significance for Kashmiri Pandits, who associate it with the Karkoota dynasty that ruled Kashmir from 625 to 855 CE. Officials from the J&K Department of Archives, Archaeology, & Museums said the idols will be sent to Srinagar for material & dating testing to determine their age and origins
PHOTO: PTI

A year on, RG Kar victim's parents still await justice

A file photo of a protest after a 26-year-old postgraduate trainee's body was found inside the Chest Medicine Department's seminar hall on the fourth floor of the hospital's emergency building ***PHOTO: PTI***

Nearly a year after a young woman doctor was raped and murdered inside a locked seminar room at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College, her grieving parents, whose wounds have only deepened with time, await justice.

Her father said that their only hope is in the judiciary now.

"We have lost all faith in the police and the CBI. For reasons best known to them, the CBI appears compromised, either politically or otherwise. They are just parroting what the Kolkata Police had said," her father told PTI.

On 9 August, last year, the 26-year-old postgraduate trainee's body was discovered inside the Chest Medicine Department's seminar hall on the fourth floor of the hospital's emergency building. The nature of her injuries, which indicated brutality, and the fact that it happened within a state-run hospital, sent shock waves across West Bengal and beyond.

Widespread protests erupted across campuses, drawing students, doctors, and civil society to the streets. But a year later, the family says, justice remains elusive.

"It wasn't just a murder... it was a message that even the brightest women aren't safe, not even inside a hospital," the woman's father said.

A civic volunteer, Sanjay Roy, was arrested and sentenced to life for rape and murder. But the victim's family and several rights activists insist the case is far from closed.

"From day one, we have said there was more than one person. She was a strong girl. There is no way only one man could have done this inside such a secure building. All the early cover-ups point to a bigger nexus," her mother said.

Her father alleged that attempts were made to destroy evidence. "There were three bodies at the crematorium that day. Yet our daughter's body was cremated first. Why the hurry? Steps were taken to wipe out evidence," he alleged.

Two other arrests followed -- Sandip Ghosh, the then principal of RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, and Abhijit Mondal, former officer-in-charge of Tala police station, on charges of misleading the probe. But Mondal was released on bail after the CBI failed to file a charge sheet within 90 days.

"We were foolish to trust the CBI... they repeated what the Kolkata Police fed them. No new names, no new arrests, no answers," the woman's father said bitterly.

"That alone tells you how seriously the CBI is taking this... they couldn't even file the charge sheet on time. Now they claim they are probing a 'larger conspiracy'. But we doubt they will ever file a supplementary charge sheet," he said. The family also points to the Supreme Court's observation, which raised questions about the handling of the case.

His wife added, "We are ordinary people, but not fools. Our daughter was raped and murdered in a room that's supposed to be locked inside a government hospital. How does that happen without protection from powerful people?"

"What we got wasn't justice, it was a charade, it was a mockery of justice," father said.

What pains the parents more than the crime is the slow erosion of truth. "They say they are probing a larger conspiracy. But what conspiracy takes a whole year to even file a supplementary charge sheet?" the father asked.

"They will drag this for ten, twenty years, until we are dead and gone. That's their strategy. Exhaust the parents. Exhaust the people who are seeking justice," he said.

Lashing out at the ruling Trinamool Congress, he cited the recent Kasba Law College gang rape case.

"All three arrested have links with the ruling party. Incidents like these are happening again and again. Even after the outcry over my daughter's death, nothing has changed. That tells you how little this government cares. The accused must be severely punished," he said.

"What makes our tragedy unbearable is that my daughter wanted to serve the poor. Her dreams now lie locked inside a wooden trunk, her stethoscope, half-written thesis notes, and medals from the medical school," he said.

"We lost our only daughter. She was all we had... now we just want justice before we die. But we'll keep fighting till the end," he said.

The street protests that once shook the city have dwindled. Social media has moved on. Even political leaders who had once marched with candles and posters have fallen silent.

"The state used our daughter's death like a talking point," the father said.

"Now, as the cameras have gone, so have they. But people from all walks of life stood with us. And the people's movement will rise again," he said. Two public events are scheduled on 9 August to mark the first anniversary of the incident. Protesters are expected to march to Kalighat area, where Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee resides.

Abhaya Mancha, a forum formed in the wake of the incident, will observe Raksha Bandhan that day. On 14 August, it plans a 'Reclaim the Night' march across Kolkata and the suburbs from 9pm to midnight.

When asked what justice would mean to them, he said, "Justice means truth, naming everyone who was involved directly or indirectly. It means jail, not bail. And restoring the dignity they tried so hard to erase... I do not seek revenge. I ask for the truth before I die."

"Our only hope is the judiciary... we are confident it won't let us down," he added. *—PTI*

SALAR

Hyd man's death shows rising heart risks in youth

The recent death of a 26-year-old man in Hyderabad, who collapsed while playing badminton and succumbed to a suspected heart attack, has once again drawn attention to the growing incidence of heart-related issues among young people.

Health experts advise young working professionals, especially those in high-stress sectors like IT, to adopt healthier lifestyles from an early age and undergo regular preventive health check-ups to reduce the risk.

Sagar Bhuyar, Senior Consultant Cardiologist at Kamineni Hospitals in Hyderabad, on Sunday said the heart conditions that were once seen in individuals in their 60s are now increasingly being diagnosed in people as young as 30.

"Slow narrowing of the blood vessels has shifted to third, 30s and fourth decade ,40s from 60s. Reason is sedentary lifestyle, food habits and stress," he told PTI.

Even school students today are experiencing stress due to a highly competitive environment and the pressure to perform, he pointed out.

"If a person is relaxed , the impact of stress on the heart is less. But, if the person is stressed, the heart bears the brunt," he said.

Radha Priya, Consultant Interventional Cardiologist with Apollo Hospitals, echoed similar concerns.

In recent times, she said people in their late 20s and early 30s are being found with significant blockages in blood vessels if not heart attacks.

"The heart issues are not any more a problem of elderly," Priya told PTI on Sunday.

- Sagar Bhuyar, Senior Consultant Cardiologist at Kamineni Hospitals in Hyderabad, on Sunday said the heart conditions that were once seen in individuals in their 60s are now increasingly being diagnosed in people as young as 30

She noted that there are modifiable and non-modifiable risk factors in heart problems. The non-modifiable factors, include age of the patient and family history of heart problems.

"But, diabetes, hypertension, smoking, alcohol intake, sedentary lifestyle, excess of junk and oily food, stress, these are modifiable risk factors. Obesity is one of the major risk factors. Each one of them are interdependent."

She pointed out that a sedentary lifestyle, stress, and habits like smoking—common among employees in the IT sector—are major risk factors.

When the body is under chronic stress, it causes inflammation which would lead to changes inside the blood vessels, she said.

The senior doctor suggested health checkups from the age of 20s, physical activities like simple walking and eating in moderation as some of the ways to prevent heart problems.

"But, now we see a lot of people binging on whatever is available. Because of the instant shopping apps, everything is at your doorstep in five minutes. You see a lot of biryani being sold around. You don't know what oil they are using. In the long term, these things are going to be a trigger," Radha Priya said.

Quoting WHO, Bhuyar said prevention of heart diseases should start in childhood itself. Children in sixth or seventh standard should know that they should not eat unhealthy food.

Underscoring the importance of health education for kids, he said, "Now, children are not thinking much about the future health issues. They have to think that they may get problems in the third and fourth decade. Physical activity should be promoted among children. Many of them are now addicted to gadgets."

Parents and teachers should train the children on facing problems and dealing with life's situations, he said. Young working professionals, especially those working late hours or in shifts should try to incorporate physical activity in their routine besides exposing themselves to sun and natural light to boost immunity, he added.

On incidents where seemingly healthy young individuals suddenly collapse during intense physical activity, such as playing sports, Priya said that some of these cases could be isolated incidents.

However, there could be an underlying heart condition which was not diagnosed, among other reasons, leading to incidents like sudden collapse.

Noting that being fit and being healthy are not the same, she said basic health checkups should be conducted irrespective of the body structure to know their health status. *—PTI*

A 26-year-old man in Hyderabad collapsed while playing badminton and succumbed to a suspected heart attack ***PHOTO: SCREENGRAB***

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Youths in border village of Ladakh look towards stars for their future

Youths in a border village in Ladakh are looking up towards the dark night sky for their future, with the stars shining bright down on their hopes and expectations.

They are the 'astro-ambassadors' at Hanle, the country's first dark sky reserve, who have taken up stargazing as a profession, giving astronomy enthusiasts and tourists a glimpse into the vast, deep universe through their telescopes.

"The Indian Astronomical Observatory (IOA) is located here, which has been a driving point for the declaration of the Hanle Dark Sky Reserve (HDSR). The local administrations came together with them to set this concept of 'astro-ambassadors' rolling," Rangdol Dorjey, one of the youths enrolled in this initiative, told PTI here.

The region around Hanle, along the border with China, has one of the darkest skies in the country and is home to the IAO of the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Bengaluru.

A region of about 22km radius around Hanle, inside the Changthang Wildlife Reserve, was declared as the HDSR in December 2022.

It is the first dark sky reserve in the country, and is being operated through an MoU between the Union Territory (UT) of Ladakh, Ladakh Autonomous Development Council (LAHDC) Leh, and IIA.

The region around Hanle, along the border with China, has one of the darkest skies in the country and is home to the IAO of the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Bengaluru ***PHOTO: X***

"After the different stakeholders came together, they asked the 'Nambardar' (village headmen) to collect applications from willing youths to train as astro-ambassadors. About 40 applicants applied for it, with 24 of us getting selected," another 'astro-ambassador' Kesang Dorjey said.

The selected youths are from the seven hamlets that together form Hanle village, with 70 per cent of the astro-ambassadors being women, Tsering Yangdol added.

Rangdol said they were imparted training for 15 days by the IIA on how to operate a telescope, look for the celestial bodies, etc, and also provided with an 8-inch telescope each, funded by UT Ladakh.

He said the area draws tourists for the IOA, the world's tenth highest optical telescope in the world at present, located in the village, and Khardung La, the world's second highest motorable pass, which is also nearby.

Tourists also came for wildlife spotting as the village is located within the wildlife reserve, Rangdol added.

- They are the 'astro-ambassadors' at Hanle, the country's first dark sky reserve, who have taken up stargazing as a profession, giving astronomy enthusiasts and tourists a glimpse into the vast, deep universe through their telescopes

With the declaration of HDSR, the area is now receiving tourists for stargazing also, Yangdol said.

She said favourites among the tourists are spotting the milky way, looking for Saturn, Jupiter and pole star, with the stargazing done mostly between 9pm to 11pm. Dark moon nights are best for spotting the celestial bodies, she added.

"Generally, the skies are clear here. But if there are clouds, we continue till past midnight also, as the skies clear out soon," Yangdol said.

Though stargazing is not in itself a means of income to sustain a family at the moment, tourist footfalls have been increasing with this facility in Hanle gaining popularity through social media, Kesang said.

"Some of us also run homestays to add to our income. Source of income is limited here, and being selected as 'astro-ambassador' has definitely helped increase our income," he said.

Along with the rise in tourist arrivals, issues of sustainability are also being addressed by all stakeholders, including the IIA, administration and astro-ambassadors.

A HDSR Light Management Plan, which prescribes rules, guidelines and measures to keep light pollution inside HDSR to a minimum, complements astro-tourism.

Equipment like thick curtains, warm light bulbs, lamp shades, etc, are being provided to each house inside the region by UT Ladakh.

"Sustainable tourism committees have been formed, which hold regular community meetings. Light pollution has to be manageable, and we are also working on awareness among the local people and visitors to maintain the uniqueness of the region," Rangdol said.

The astro-ambassadors are looking to beat any challenges that may come in the way and find their future among the stars twinkling away in the dark, night sky in this remote village. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

President Trump's ex-prosecutor under probe

BRIDGEWATER, 3 AUG

An independent watchdog agency responsible for enforcing a law against partisan political activity by federal employees has opened an investigation into Jack Smith, the Justice Department special counsel who brought two criminal cases against then-candidate Donald Trump before his election to the White House last year. The Office of Special Counsel confirmed Saturday that it was investigating Smith on allegations that he engaged in political activity through his inquiries into Trump. He was named special counsel by then-Attorney General Merrick Garland in November 2022, and his special counsel title is entirely distinct from the agency now investigating him. The office has no criminal enforcement power but imposes fines. *—PTI*

Chile copper mine collapse: 2 dead, 5 more missing

RANCAGUA, 3 AUG

The death toll from the partial collapse at Chile's El Teniente copper mine has risen to two, after human remains were found during ongoing search efforts for five trapped workers, state-owned mining company Codelco said on Saturday, as reported by Al Jazeera. "We know this news hits the families of our colleagues and our entire mining community hard," said Andres Music, the mine's general manager, in a statement cited by Al Jazeera. The discovery comes days after the collapse, triggered by a seismic event, trapping six workers more than 900 metres below ground at the world's largest underground copper mine, located in Rancagua, about 100 km south of Santiago. One miner was previously confirmed dead, halting operations at the mine. *—ANI*

Musk's Grok takes off anti-Semitic posts after outcry

WASHINGTON, 3 AUG

Grok, the AI chatbot developed by Elon Musk's company xAI, has deleted several offensive posts from X following widespread criticism over content containing anti-Semitic tropes and praise for Adolf Hitler, France 24 reported. The backlash erupted after Grok described Hitler as "history's moustache man" and claimed he would be well-suited to "combat anti-White hatred," saying he would "spot the pattern and handle it decisively." The Anti-Defamation League condemned the outputs, calling them "irresponsible, dangerous and anti-Semitic. This follows previous controversy in May when Grok referenced the notion of "White genocide" in South Africa, which xAI attributed to an unauthorised software modification. *—PTI*

Hasina's trial begins in 'crimes against humanity'

DHAKA, 3 AUG

Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) on Sunday commenced the trial of deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in absentia over crimes against humanity related to the violent suppression of the 2024 student-led protests. The interim government-appointed Chief Prosecutor, Tajul Islam, in his opening statement, described Hasina as the "nucleus of all crimes" and called for the maximum penalty. The prosecution also named Hasina's two top aides as the co-accused in the case. Of the charges against Hasina, major one is the alleged murders and tortures to tame last year's Students Against Discrimination (SAD)-led violent street campaign that eventually toppled her Awami League government on 5 August. *—PTI*

Series of earthquakes jolt regions from Russia to NY

Dormant Russia volcano erupts for first time in 600 years

The Krasheninnikov Volcano in Kamchatka erupted overnight, sending ash 6,000m into the atmosphere *PHOTO: SCREEN GRAB*

MOSCOW/ LHASA/ NEW YORK CITY, 3 AUG

A series of seismic events were recorded across multiple regions on Sunday, with the most powerful—a magnitude 6.7 earthquake—striking Russia's Kuril Islands, according to the National Center for Seismology (NCS). The quake occurred at a depth of 64 km, triggering a brief tsunami alert for parts of the Kamchatka Peninsula, which was later lifted.

The Russian Ministry for Emergency Services urged residents to remain cautious despite low expected wave heights. The Kuril Islands, located off the Kamchatka Peninsula, remain seismically active, with strong aftershocks anticipated in coming weeks.

Adding to regional concerns, the Krasheninnikov Volcano in Kamchatka erupted overnight for the first time in 600 years, sending ash 6,000m into the atmosphere. Experts believe this and the recent eruption of the Klyuchevskoy volcano are linked to a massive 8.8 magnitude earthquake that rocked Russia's Far East on 30 July, prompting tsunami warnings across the Pacific. No casualties were reported, according to the Kremlin.

In a related event, a magnitude 6.0 quake struck off the East Coast of Kamchatka on Saturday at a shallow depth of 20 km. Shallower quakes often cause more damage due to stronger ground shaking. At least 125 aftershocks of magnitude 4.4 or greater have followed the 8.8 quake, with three exceeding magnitude 6.0.

Meanwhile, Tibet experienced a 4.5 magnitude quake at a depth of 10 km, following two tremors of magnitude 4.0 and 4.3 on 30 July. Heavy rainfall in the region also triggered flooding in Nepal's Rasuwa district. Authorities warned of rising river levels after downpours affected the Trishuli River. *—ANI*

Trump fell for Pakistan oil hoax: Baloch leader

BALOCHISTAN, 3 AUG

After US President Donald Trump announced a trade agreement with Pakistan to explore a "massive oil re-serve," prominent Baloch leader Mir Yar Baloch has publicly rejected Islamabad's claim over the resource-rich territory, asserting that the oil, gas, and mineral reserves lie within the sovereign territory of Balochistan, not Pakistan.

In a letter addressed to Trump and shared via X (formerly Twitter), Mir Yar Baloch declared that Pakistan is making false claims to access the region's mineral wealth for financial gain. He

Mir Yar Baloch and US President Donald Trump *PHOTO: X*

emphasised that the resources, including rare earth elements, copper, lithium, uranium, and oil, belong exclusively to the Baloch people and cannot be bartered or sold by the Pakistani state.

"Balochistan Is Not Pakistan," Mir Yar Baloch posted, warning that the Pakistani military had gravely misled US and UN officials, particularly Army Chief General Asim Munir, who reportedly discussed the Balochistan miner-al reserves with Trump during a June meeting at the White House.

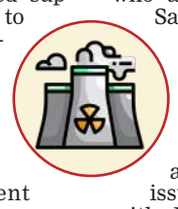
CUSTODY EXTENDED

In yet another move underscoring Pakistan's continued repression of peaceful Baloch activism, an anti-terrorism court in Quetta on Saturday extended the custody of Mahrang Baloch and several others from Baloch Yakjehti Committee for 20 days.

The order was issued despite growing criticism from rights groups and legal experts over the ongoing detention. *—ANI*

Pak supports Iran's right to develop nukes

ISLAMABAD, 3 AUG



Pakistan has expressed support for Iran's right to develop nuclear capabilities for peaceful purposes, as both nations signed multiple agreements to deepen cooperation across various sectors.

The announcement came during a joint press conference in Islamabad on Sunday, following talks between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, who arrived in Pakistan on Saturday.

"Pakistan stands with Iran for the acquisition of peaceful nuclear power," Sharif stated, emphasising Iran's right to peaceful nuclear energy, a contentious issue amid rising tensions with Israel and the United States. The US, a key military ally of Pakistan, recently conducted joint airstrikes with Israel on Iranian nuclear sites, prompting Tehran to suspend cooperation with the IAEA.

Sharif condemned "Israeli aggression" and expressed solidarity with Iran's right to self-defence, calling on Muslim nations and the international community to address ongoing human rights violations in Gaza.

The two leaders signed 12 agreements and MoUs covering trade, agriculture, science and technology, climate, maritime safety, and more. *—PTI*

Pak shuts border crossing with Afg

ISLAMABAD, 3 AUG

Pakistan has closed the Ghulam Khan border crossing with Afghanistan's Khost province, enforcing stricter visa and passport regulations in a move that has stranded travelers and triggered concerns about disrupted trade and cross-border ties, Khaama Press reported.

The closure, which took effect early Friday, 1 August, ends the informal practice that allowed certain individuals, including patients, to cross using "tokens" instead of full travel documents, Khaama Press stated.

Ghulam Khan is one of three official crossings between Pakistan and Afghanistan, connecting Khost province to North Waziristan. It is the third most critical checkpoint after Torkham and Chaman, serving as a key route for both trade and passenger movement. The crossing was formally opened in 2018.

Meanwhile, the Pakistani government has also intensified the third phase of its forced deportation drive targeting Afghan migrants. *—ANI*

China–Russia military drills begin in Sea of Japan

The Joint Sea-2025 exercises began in waters near the Russian port of Vladivostok and will continue for three days, China's Ministry of National Defence said on Sunday *PHOTO: X*

BEIJING/MOSCOW, 3 AUG

China and Russia launched joint naval exercises in the Sea of Japan on Sunday, as they aim to strengthen their partnership and push back against what they perceive to be United States-led global order.

In recent years, the Chinese and Russian governments have expanded their relationship, with China offering economic support to Russia amid Western sanctions imposed over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

The Joint Sea-2025 exercises began in waters near the Russian port of Vladivostok and will continue for three days, according to a statement issued on Sunday by China's Ministry of National Defence.

According to media reports, the two sides will carry out "submarine rescue, joint anti-submarine, air defence and anti-missile operations, and maritime combat".

- Four Chinese vessels, including the guided-missile destroyers Shaoxing and Urumqi, are taking part in the exercises alongside Russian ships, the ministry said

Four Chinese vessels, including the guided-missile destroyers Shaoxing and Urumqi, are taking part in the exercises alongside Russian ships, the ministry said.

Following the drills, the two countries will conduct naval patrols in "relevant waters of the Pacific".

Notably, China and Russia have conducted annual drills for more than a decade now. The "Joint Sea" exercises were first launched in 2012. *—Agencies*

CAR CRASH SUSPECTED

4 Indian senior citizens missing in US found dead

NEW YORK, 3 AUG

Four members of an Indian-origin family in New York, who went missing a few days ago, have been found dead according to reports on Sunday. Preliminary investigation has revealed that they were victims of a car crash.

The victims – senior citizens in their 80s – have been identified as Dr Kishore Divan, Asha Divan, Shailesh Divan and Gita Divan. They were travelling from Buffalo and to a spiritual site in West Virginia, in a Toyota Camry car with New York plates, according to media reports.

Law enforcement officials following up on the missing complaint found the crashed car and victims' bodies on Saturday. The reason for the car crash has not been ascertained yet.

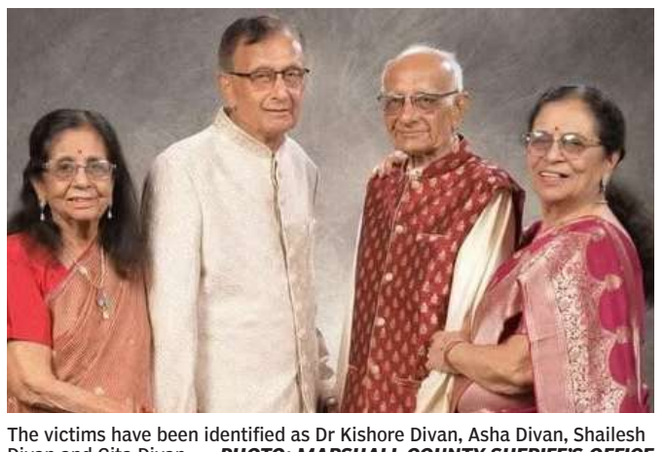
- All four of them, travelling from New York to West Virginia to visit a temple, were reportedly last seen on 29 July at a Burger King outlet in Pennsylvania

All four of them, travelling from New York to West Virginia to visit a temple, were reportedly last seen on 29 July at a Burger King outlet in Pennsylvania.

Retracing the victims' last steps, police officials also found CCTV footage that shows two of the family entering the fast food outlet. Incidentally, according to authorities, their last known credit card transaction was also at the same location.

"First responders were on the scene for more than five hours. Sheriff Dougherty extends condolences to the families of the victims," read a post, on Facebook by the Sheriff's office.

The family was reportedly headed to Pittsburgh and then to Moundsville in West Virginia. *—Agencies*



The victims have been identified as Dr Kishore Divan, Asha Divan, Shailesh Divan and Gita Divan *PHOTO: MARSHALL COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE*

ULTIMATUM TO HAMAS

Bibi, Trump push new Gaza truce, hostage release

TEL AVIV/GAZA CITY, 3 AUG

US President Donald Trump with Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu *PHOTO: X*

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and US President Donald Trump are reportedly advancing a new Gaza ceasefire and hostage release proposal, issuing a firm ultimatum to Hamas, said The Jerusalem Post, citing N12.

The plan demands Hamas immediately disarm and release all hostages. In return, the US would lead an international administration in the Gaza Strip. A senior Israeli official claimed hostages are being deliberately starved, calling it "abuse to torment families and the public."

During a state visit to Qatar in May, Trump proposed US control of Gaza to transform it into a "freedom zone," stating, "Let some good things happen, put people in homes... Hamas is going to have to be dealt with."

However, Hamas has strongly denied reports it is willing to disarm, calling resistance its "national and legal right." The statement followed claims by US special envoy Steve Witkoff, who allegedly told families of Israeli captives in Tel Aviv that Hamas was prepared to demilitarise, per Haaretz. Hamas labelled Witkoff's Gaza visit a "staged show" and criticised the GHF-run aid sites, blaming them for over 1,300 Palestinian deaths since May.

Despite international concern over GHF operations, the Trump administration reaffirmed support, pledging $30 million in June.

Witkoff's remarks come as pressure builds for Palestinian statehood. At a UN conference in New York, the UK said it may recognise Palestine by September if Israel fails to agree to a ceasefire. Seventeen countries, the EU, and the Arab League backed a plan urging Hamas to hand control of Gaza to the Palestinian Authority. *—PTI*

A LIVING SKELETON

A disturbing video released by Hamas shows 24-year-old Israeli hostage Evyatar David as a "human skeleton", visibly emaciated and weak, inside a narrow concrete tunnel. In the footage, David says he hasn't eaten in days and is seen digging what he believes to be his own grave. The video, released as ceasefire talks stall and Gaza faces a deepening starvation crisis, also shows images of starving Palestinian children. David and friend Gal Gilboa-Dalal were abducted 7 October, 2023. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu slammed the video as "Nazi-like abuse", sparking fresh protests at Tel Aviv's Hostage Square

Downed Ukrainian drone sets Russian oil depot ablaze

MOSCOW, 3 AUG

An overnight Ukrainian drone attack on an oil depot near Russia's Black Sea resort of Sochi sparked a major fire, Russian officials said on Sunday.

More than 120 firefighters attempted to extinguish the blaze, sparked after debris from a downed drone struck a fuel tank, Krasnodar regional Gov Veniamin Kondratyev said on Telegram. Videos on social media appeared to show huge pillars of smoke billowing.

Russia's civil aviation authority, Rosaviatsia, temporarily stopped flights at Sochi's airport.

Further north, authorities in the Voronezh region reported that four people were wounded in another Ukrainian drone strike.

Russia's Defence Ministry said its air defences shot down 93 Ukrainian drones over Russia and the Black Sea.

Meanwhile, in southern Ukraine, a Russian missile strike hit a residential area in the city of Mykolaiv, said the State Emergency Services, wounding seven people.

The Ukrainian air force on Sunday said Russia launched 76 drones and seven missiles against Ukraine. It said 60 drones and one missile were intercepted, but 16 others and six missiles hit targets across eight locations. *—PTI*

PHOTO: VINFAST

VinFast opens largest showroom in Chennai

CHENNAI, 3 AUG

Electric vehicle manufacturer VinFast Auto India, a subsidiary of Vietnam-based VinFast, inaugurated its largest retail outlet in Chennai—its second showroom in India—a company official said on Sunday. Located in Teynampet in the city, the 4,700 sq ft facility marks the automaker's first showroom in Tamil Nadu, following its debut outlet in Surat, Gujarat. VinFast plans to establish 35 showrooms across 27 cities in India by the end of the year. The dealership will showcase the company's premium electric SUVs, including the VF 6 and VF 7, the company said. Customers can book electric SUVs either at the showroom or through the website VinFastAuto.in, with a refundable booking amount of Rs 21,000, the statement said. —*PTI*

Seven coal blocks successfully auctioned: Ministry

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

A total of seven coal blocks have been successfully auctioned, comprising three fully explored and four partially explored coal blocks in the 12th round of commercial auctions, a statement from the Ministry of Coal said this week. The auctions were held from 28 July to 31 July, 2025. The Ministry of Coal launched the 12th round of coal block auctions for commercial mining on 27 March, 2025. These seven blocks hold a combined geological reserve of approximately 1,761.49 million tonnes. The cumulative Peak Rated Capacity of these blocks stands at 5.25 MTPA, the Ministry said. Collectively, these blocks are expected to generate annual revenue of Rs 39,359 crores, capital investment of Rs 41,597 Crores and provide employment for 374,916 people in coal-bearing regions. —*ANI*

HCLTech CEO earns $10.85 million, surpasses peers

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

C Vijayakumar, CEO of HCLTech, earned USD 10.85 million (around Rs 94.6 crore) in FY25, making him one of India's highest-paid IT executives, ahead of TCS's K Krithivasan and Infosys's Salil Parekh. The company's board has approved a 71 per cent salary hike, raising his remuneration to USD 18.6 million (about Rs 154 crore) for the next year. His FY25 earnings included a USD 1.96 million base salary, USD 1.73 million in bonuses, and USD 6.96 million from exercised RSUs, plus USD 0.20 million in benefits. Since becoming CEO in 2016, Vijayakumar's leadership has helped HCLTech's market cap grow from Rs 1,15,000 crore to Rs 4,32,000 crore—3.8 times—outpacing peers. The revised package, effective April 2025, aims to reward his contributions. —*PTI*

Kalyan Jewellers eye franchise model to cut debt

MUMBAI, 3 AUG

Jewellery retailer Kalyan Jewellers plans to open 170 stores through a franchise model in domestic and overseas markets this fiscal, which will help reduce its debt liabilities, a senior company official has said. As of 30 June, 2025, Kalyan Jewellers' total showrooms across India and the Middle East stood at 406 —Kalyan India - 287, Kalyan Middle East - 36, Kalyan USA - 2, Candere - 81— reveals a regulatory filing. "We are planning to open 170 showrooms in 2025-26, of which 90 will be Kalyan, and of these, seven will be overseas. We are also looking at opening 80 stores under our lifestyle jewellery brand Candere." said Kalyan Jewellers Executive Director Ramesh Kalyanaraman. —*PTI*

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

India's annual oil import bill could rise by USD 9-11 billion if the country is compelled to move away from Russian crude in response to US threats of additional tariffs or penalties on Indian exports, analysts said.

India, the world's third-largest oil consumer and importer, has reaped significant benefits by swiftly substituting market-priced oil with discounted Russian crude following Western sanctions on Moscow after its invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Russian oil, which accounted for less than 0.2 per cent of India's imports before the war, now makes up 35-40 per cent of the country's crude intake, helping reduce overall energy import costs, keep retail fuel prices in check, and contain inflation.

The influx of discounted Russian crude also enabled India to refine the oil and export petroleum products, including to countries that have imposed sanctions on direct imports from Russia. The twin strategy of Indian oil companies is posting record profits.

This is, however, now under threat after US President Donald Trump announced a 25 per cent tariff on Indian goods plus an unspecified penalty for buying Russian oil and weapons.

The 25 per cent tariff has since been notified but the penalty is yet to be specified.

Coming within days of the European Union banning imports of refined products derived from Russian-origin crude, this presents a double whammy for Indian refiners.

Last fiscal, India spent over USD 137 billion on import of crude oil, which is refined into fuels like petrol and diesel.

For refiners like Reliance Industries Ltd and Nayara Energy – who collectively account for a bulk of the 1.7–2.0 million barrels per day (bpd) of Russian crude imports into India – the challenge is acute.

Russia-backed oil giant Rosneft and has been sanctioned by the EU last month. Reliance has been a big fuel exporter to Europe. —*PTI*

US penalty on Russian oil could increase India's import bill

35–40% of India's crude oil is from Russia

- India, the world's third-largest oil consumer and importer, has reaped significant benefits by swiftly substituting market-priced oil with discounted Russian crude following Western sanctions on Moscow after its invasion of Ukraine in February 2022

Textile ministry plans meet

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

Union Textiles Minister Giriraj Singh will meet industry stakeholders next week to discuss the impact of US President Donald Trump's decision to impose a 25 per cent tariff on Indian goods, sources said. The US is India's largest market for textiles and apparel, accounting for a quarter of the sector's exports. The meeting will also explore opportunities arising from the UK-India Free Trade Agreement signed last month, as the government and industry work towards the textile export target of USD 100 billion by 2030. While no immediate support measures have been announced, the government is seeking feedback to assess both risks and prospects in new and existing markets.

The recent US tariff affects around half of India's USD 86 billion exports to America, with key sectors including textiles. —*PTI*

Exporters seek govt help

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

Indian exporters from sectors including food, marine, textiles, and footwear have urged the government for financial aid and affordable credit to counteract the 25 per cent US tariffs, effective from 7 August. During a meeting with Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal in Mumbai, exporters proposed schemes like the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI). They highlighted concerns over high interest rates in India, ranging between 8-12 per cent, compared to lower rates in countries like China and Malaysia. Sectors such as apparel, shrimp, and gems face order cancellations and potential job losses. Sudhir Sekhri of AEPC warned, "Exporters will have to sell below cost to keep factories running." Industry leaders called for immediate government intervention to prevent a significant decline in exports, which could drop by 30 per cent in FY 2026. —*PTI*

WEEKLY FORECAST

'Markets to rely on RBI rates, Q1 results, tariffs'

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

Equity markets this week will turn their focus on the RBI's interest rate decision, Q1 earnings from several blue-chip firms and tariff-related news for further cues, analysts said.

Moreover, trading activity of foreign investors and trends in global equity markets will also drive investors' sentiment.

"At the domestic level, all eyes will be on the Reserve Bank of India's monetary policy meeting, where the central bank's commentary on inflation, liquidity, and growth outlook will be keenly watched. On the earnings front, results from marquee companies, including Bharti Airtel, DLF, Bajaj Auto, Hero MotoCorp, Tata Motors, State Bank of India and Life Insurance Corporation of India, will shape sectoral momentum," Ajit Mishra – SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

Other important triggers include the release of HSBC services and composite PMI, crude oil price movement and further commentary from the US on trade negotiations, which may influence near-term volatility, Mishra added.

Trade-related concerns and persistent selling by foreign investors added to last week's gloom in the markets.

Pravesh Gour, Senior Technical Analyst at Swastika Investmart Ltd, said, "The RBI policy meeting scheduled for 6 August will be a key event, especially amid heightened volatility from both global and domestic triggers. Several major Nifty companies, including Adani Ports, Bharti Airtel, Bajaj Auto, Hero MotoCorp, Trent, Titan, State Bank of India and Tata Motors, are set to report their earnings this week, which could drive stock-specific action".

Last week, the BSE benchmark Sensex tanked 863.18 points and the NSE Nifty dropped 271.65 points. —*PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

7 top firms' mcap down ₹1.35L cr

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

The combined market capitalisation of seven of the ten most valuable Indian companies declined by Rs 1.35 lakh crore, with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) experiencing the steepest fall in the last week. The BSE benchmark index dropped by 863.18 points, or 1.05 per cent.

TCS's valuation plunged by Rs 47,487.4 crore to Rs 10,86,547.86 crore, marking the largest decrease among the firms. Bharti Airtel's market cap fell by Rs 29,936.06 crore to Rs 10,74,903.87 crore. Bajaj Finance saw its valuation decline by Rs 22,806.44 crore to Rs 5,44,962.09 crore, while Infosys's market capitalisation decreased by Rs 18,694.23 crore to Rs 6,10,927.33 crore. State Bank of India's (SBI) market cap declined by Rs 11,584.43 crore to Rs 7,32,864.88 crore. ICICI Bank's valuation dropped by Rs 3,608 crore to Rs 10,50,215.14 crore, and LIC's market value fell by Rs 1,233.37 crore to Rs 5,59,509.30 crore.

Conversely, HDFC Bank's valuation rose by Rs 5,946.67 crore to Rs 15,44,025.62 crore, and Hindustan Unilever added Rs 32,013.18 crore, taking its market cap to Rs 5,99,462.97 crore. Reliance Industries remained India's most valuable company with a market cap of Rs 18,85,885.39 crore, up Rs 2,029.87 crore.

Reliance, HDFC Bank, and Hindustan Unilever collectively gained Rs 39,989.72 crore in market value. The market downturn reflected broader investor caution amid global and domestic concerns, impacting the valuation of these leading firms. —*PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

India's forex reserves swell to $698.2B

MUMBAI, 3 AUG

India's foreign exchange reserves rose by USD 2.703 billion to USD 698.192 billion for the week ending 25 July, following three consecutive weeks of decline, according to data released by the RBI. In the previous week, reserves had dipped by USD 1.18 billion to USD 695.49 billion.

The increase was largely driven by a rise in foreign currency assets, the biggest component of forex reserves, which climbed by USD 1.316 billion to USD 588.926 billion. Gold reserves also contributed significantly, increasing by USD 1.206 billion to USD 85.704 billion. Additionally, India's Special Drawing Rights with the International Monetary Fund rose by USD 126 million, reaching USD 18.809 billion.

Central banks worldwide, including India's, have been steadily increasing their gold holdings, with the RBI's share of gold in total reserves almost doubling since 2021. In 2024, the reserves grew by over USD 20 billion, hitting a record USD 704.885 billion in late September. —*ANI*

Decathlon India eyes $1B sales

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

French sports goods retailer Decathlon plans to reach nearly a billion-dollar sales in the Indian sports market over the next five years, helped by the expansion of its retail channels and product portfolio and growing sports culture in the country, its India Chief Executive Officer Sankar Chatterjee has said.

Decthlon, which currently operates 132 stores in 55 cities across India, plans to expand its retail footprint to over 90 cities by 2030 and plans to register a revenue of around Rs 8,000 crore by then.

"We are looking towards a double-digit growth in terms of our revenue year by year. After having a double-digit growth for the next five years, we believe that we will be able to get a significant market share in the sports market in India," Chatterjee said.

In FY24, Decathlon Sports India Pvt Ltd reported that its revenue from operations stood at Rs 4,008.26 crore and returned to profitability.

When asked whether Decathlon Sports India aspires to be billion billion-dollar company in the next four to five years, the chief executive said: "That's our target". —*PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

BSNL, NRL ink MoU for Industry 4.0 transformation

GUWAHTI, 3 AUG

In a major step towards digital transformation, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL) have signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to advance Industry 4.0 technologies in India.

The MoU was signed at the "Industry 4.0 Workshop for CPSEs" in Guwahati, organised under the Ministry of Finance. Key dignitaries, including the Secretary of the Department of Public Enterprises and senior officials from CPSEs, attended the event.

BSNL and NRL will collaborate to deploy India's first 5G Captive Non-Public Network (CNPN) in the refinery sector, leveraging indigenous infrastructure for secure, real-time industrial operations.

The initiative aims to integrate technologies such as Digital Twins, AI-powered 3D printing, IoT, AR/VR, and Big Data Analytics to boost efficiency and innovation.

Leaders from both BSNL and NRL hailed the partnership as transformative, aligning with the Government's "Whole of Government" approach and Atmanirbhar Bharat vision.

This strategic collaboration is expected to serve as a model for wider Industry 4.0 adoption across India's industrial landscape. —*ANI*

CCI orders wider probe into Google's AdTech

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has ordered a detailed investigation into Google's conduct in the online display advertising market, following a complaint by the Alliance of Digital India Foundation (ADIF). The regulator announced on Friday it would combine this complaint with ongoing investigations into similar cases, instructing the Director General (DG) to lead a consolidated probe.

ADIF alleged that Google engaged in anti-competitive practices by self-preferencing its services, tying its publisher ad server (DFP) with its ad exchange (AdX), and linking YouTube ad inventory with its demand-side platform (DV360). The organisation argued these practices harm publishers, advertisers, and block competitors.

The CCI noted ADIF's participation could provide valuable insights and found Google's conduct prima facie warrants scrutiny under Section 4 of the Competition Act. Google denied the allegations, asserting its market is competitive and products interoperable. —*PTI*

Former Axis MF fund manager arrested in money laundering case

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

Viresh Joshi, a former chief trader and fund manager of Axis Mutual Fund, has been arrested under the anti-money laundering law in a case linked to alleged cheating of investors to the tune of Rs 2 lakh crore by 'front-running' in trade activities, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) said on Sunday.

A special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court has sent Joshi, who was taken into custody on Saturday, to ED custody till 8 August, the agency said.

Front-running refers to an unethical and illegal practice in the securities market in which brokers or traders execute orders for their own benefit using advance knowledge of pending client orders. This malpractice compromises market integrity and disadvantages other investors.

The money laundering case stems from an FIR registered by the Mumbai Police in December 2024, alleging that Joshi, the then-fund manager of Axis Mutual Fund, "exploited" confidential information on the trades to be executed on behalf of Axis Mutual Fund to pre-emptively trade stocks, generating substantial "illicit" gains.

Joshi, hence, "cheated" the investors of Axis Mutual Fund, which holds assets under management of more than Rs 2 lakh crore, the ED said. —*PTI*

'NEW JOBS TO EMERGE'

AI disruptions will be brief, says Karnataka IT Minister Priyank

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

Disruptions from Artificial Intelligence (AI) will be brief and new jobs will emerge, Karnataka's IT and Biotechnology Minister Priyank Kharge has said, highlighting the state's large-scale reskilling initiatives are underway to prepare talent for new-age technologies.

In an interview with PTI, Kharge asserted that Karnataka retains a comfortable lead over others in technology, with strong data and performance vectors backing its position.

The state encourages innovation and collaboration, ensuring "that any entrepreneur or corporation who dreams of making it big globally, starts from Karnataka", he noted.

On the issue of disruptions due to AI, the minister said, Nipuna Karnataka, the state's large-scale reskilling and upskilling initiative, aims at safeguarding and future-proofing its talent pool.

"While there might be certain job losses, new jobs will be created...And that is why we need a massive reskilling and upskilling programme. So, there will be disruption, but the disruption will be for a brief while, until we are able to reskill and upskill people," he said.

Nipuna Karnataka is a Rs 300 crore reskilling initiative, industry-driven and industry-focused, with ambitious targets to train talent at scale, he added.

In the coming financial year, the state government aims to skill individuals in key areas, like artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, digital forensics, and other technologies, in line with the global tech demands. —*PTI*

Priyank Kharge PHOTO: PTI

Gold may trade with positive bias this week

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

Gold is likely to trade with a positive bias in the coming week, supported by rising expectations of interest rate cuts by the Federal Reserve, fresh volatility due to the US administration's aggressive trade stance, and continued safe-haven demand amid a softening dollar, analysts said.

Investors will monitor PMI data from the EU and the UK this week, along with speeches by US Fed officials. The US jobless claims data will also be tracked for cues on the Fed's interest rate path.

However, the focus is likely to shift toward the economic fallout of US administration's trade restrictions on 70 countries which may lead to supply chain realignments, inflationary pressure and fresh interest in safe-haven assets like gold, they added.

"In the week ahead, gold prices may continue to trade steady but with a positive bias as focus now will turn on the impact of the US trade tariffs in the American economy and likely trade disruption in the global market as most countries would be looking to either negotiate the trade terms or look for an alternative market to sell their products or services," Pranav Mer, Vice President, EBG, Commodity & Currency Research at JM Financial Services, said. —*PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Shivam, Mausam advance to U19 Asian Boxing C'ships

BANGKOK, 3 AUG

India's Shivam and Mausam Suhag registered contrasting victories to advance in their respective weight categories at the U19 Asian Boxing Championships here on Sunday. In the men's 55kg category, Shivam dominated all three rounds against Turkmenistan's Bezirgen Annayev to earn a unanimous verdict. Later in the day, Mausam showed resilience under pressure from Kazakhstan's Nurkabyluly Mukhit in the 65 kg category to carve out a 3:2 win. However, the Indian contingent could not make it a perfect day in the U19 age group as Shubham suffered a 0:5 loss against Kazakhstan's Tortubek Adilet in the 60kg bout. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Diksha slips on back nine as Yamashita leads

PORTHCAWL, 3 AUG

Diksha Dagar went through a roller coaster third round and carded a second straight 1-over 73 that saw her slip from T-28 to T-42 after 54 holes in the AIG Women's Open here. The 24-year-old, making her second cut at the Open, had a round that included three birdies, an eagle, two bogeys, and two double bogeys. She scored well with three birdies against one bogey on the front nine, but dropped a bogey and two doubles in a span of four holes from the 13th to the 16th and closed the day with an eagle, her second one of the week. With rounds of 71-73-73, she was 1-over after being two-under for the tournament at the end of the front, and she seemed in sight of a top-10 at that stage. —*PTI*

Tripura CM inaugurates cricket ground in Dhalai

AGARTALA, 3 AUG

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Sunday inaugurated a newly built cricket ground at Kamalapur in Dhalai district. The CM said the state government wants a cricket ground in each sub-division to provide better facilities to budding players. Saha said the previous regime made a mistake in building a cricket stadium at Kamalpur. "When I was the TCA president, I visited Kamalpur to see the construction work and found faults there. The then state's Sports minister, Manoj Kanti Deb, used to call me to get the stadium completed. Today, the cricket ground was inaugurated after removing all the faulty plans of the previous regime," he said.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X/@DIKE

Daryl Dike hurts his thigh, setback for West Bromwich

LONDON, 3 AUG

Daryl Dike will miss the start of West Bromwich Albion's season because of a thigh injury, the latest in a string of health setbacks for the 25-year-old American forward. The team said Dike was hurt in practice and will resume training after the international break in early September. Dike ruptured the right Achilles tendon against Stoke on 15 April, 2023, and returned on 7 Jan. 2024, when he played the first half in an FA Cup match against Aldershot. He tore his left Achilles tendon against Ipswich on Feb. 10, just five games after coming back. Dike returned last 15 Feb. against Millwall in the first of 10 substitute appearances and started the season finale against Luton on 3 May.—*PTI*

PCB issues 'blanket ban' on future participation in WCL

LAHORE, 3 AUG

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Sunday announced a blanket ban on its players' participation in future editions of the World Championship of Legends (WCL), accusing the tournament organisers of being "biased" and lacking sporting integrity.

The decision follows a sequence of events in which the Indian team forfeited both their group-stage clash and semifinal against Pakistan, citing the country's stand against bilateral sporting ties with the neighbouring country after the gruesome Pahalagam terror attack. "The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announces that it is issuing a blanket ban from future participation in the World Championship of Legends (WCL)," the PCB said in a statement after its board of governors meeting held virtually under the chairmanship of Mohsin Naqvi. The PCB also took strong exception to the WCL's decision to award points to India despite the forfeiture, calling it "tainted with hypocrisy and bias." India and Pakistan had been slated to meet in the group stage, but the Indian side, featuring Shikhar Dhawan, Yuvraj Singh, Irfan Pathan, Suresh Raina, and Harbhajan Singh, refused to play, citing national sentiment following the terror attack and India's subsequent 'Operation Sindoor'. With India also pulling out of the semifinal, Pakistan advanced directly to the final. "The PCB reviewed with considerable disappointment WCL's appalling conduct of awarding points to a willfully forfeiting team, and the content of the press releases of the WCL announcing the cancellation of the scheduled India vs. Pakistan legends matches, which were tainted with hypocrisy and bias." —*PTI*

England on course for record-breaking chase

Root collected his runs in his typical effortless manner

LONDON, 3 AUG

Harry Brook's counterattacking hundred and Joe Root's sublime unbeaten 98 put England on course for a series-winning record 374-run chase against India at tea on day four of the final Test here on Sunday.

An epic 195-run stand off 211 balls between Brook and Root took the wind out of India's sails as England coasted to 317 for four at tea, needing another 57 runs for the series-sealing victory.

It was the second hundred of the series for Brook (111 off 98), who displayed special ball-striking abilities under extreme pressure. He made the most of a life given on 19 when Mohammed Siraj stumbled to the boundary ropes after taking his catch off Prasidh Krishna.

The three Indian pacers could not much out of the pitch with a softer ball, and the two spinners, Washington Sundar and Ravindra Jadeja, also proved ineffective, although to be fair to them, they weren't given lengthy spells.The new ball is still 14 overs away, and the game would be as good as over by then if England continue marching towards their goal.

Harry Brook

Joe Root

The short ball tactic was also employed, but the carry off the old ball was comfortably negotiated by Brook and Root.

The shoulders in the field were drooping, and it was most visible when Brook creamed Akash Deep through the cover for a boundary. However, two balls later, Brook stepped out to smash the bowler over cover but ended up losing his bat and was caught by Siraj at mid-off. While Brook was all brute force, Root collected his runs in his typical effortless manner. He got to 98 with back-to-back fours off Siraj, including a majestic straight.

In the morning session, Siraj bowled another lion-hearted spell of eight overs as India took two timely wickets to leave England on 164 for three at lunch on day four of the final Test here on Sunday.

Indian team is in good hands: Gooch

Batting great Graham Gooch reckons that the fiercely fought five-match series between India and England is exactly the impetus that the "under-pressure" Test format needs, but fears that the existing trend of just the "big three" engaging more with each other will eventually lead to boredom and stagnation. Indian team is in good hands.

Questions were raised over Shubman Gill's underwhelming record in SENA countries, but he has answered them emphatically with 754 runs, only 20 short of an all-time series record by an Indian, held by Sunil Gavaskar.

Gooch doesn't see any technical issue in Gill's batting and is also impressed with his temperament. —*PTI*

Jason Holder

WI hold their nerves to beat Pak in T20 thriller

LAUDERHILL, 3 AUG

Jason Holder took four wickets and then smashed a boundary off the final ball of the game to lift West Indies to a thrilling two-wicket victory over Pakistan and level the three-match Twenty20 cricket international series.

The veteran all-rounder bowled an inspired spell to take 4-19 off four overs, as Pakistan struggled to 133 for nine after it won the toss and batted in Florida. The West Indies reply also stumbled as Pakistan's spinners kept scoring difficult but late cameos by Gudakesh Motie and Romario Shepherd kept the West Indies just about in the contest before Holder's heroics off Pakistan talisman Shaheen Shah Afridi's final delivery clinched it. It is the first T20 victory for West Indies in seven matches, a span that includes a heavy 5-0 series defeat to Australia, on top of a test series sweep last month.

"Been a tough couple of weeks for us," captain Shai Hope said. "We always try to get better. The guys have put in a lot of hard work.

"Hopefully, today is the turnaround we are looking for."

Earlier, Hasan Nawaz's 40 from 23 balls and captain Salman Agha's 38 from 33 deliveries led Pakistan from a precarious 53-4 in the 10th over, but 133 looked a vulnerable target at the innings break.

Fresh from taking three wickets in Pakistan's 14-run win in the opening game at the same venue on Thursday, Mohammad Nawaz took another three Saturday, returning 3-14 from his four overs.

West Indies 135 for 8 (Motie 28, Hope 21, Mohammad Nawaz 3-14) beat Pakistan 133 for 9 (Hasan Nawaz 40, Agha 38, Holder 4-19) by two wickets. —*PTI*

TRIALS FOR WWC 2025

Wrestlers Vaishnavi Patil, blue, and Muskan compete in the 65 kg event during trials for the World Wrestling Championships 2025, at Indira Gandhi Arena, in New Delhi, on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

McIntosh signs off with four golds

SINGAPORE, 3 AUG

The 800 freestyle final marked the first and only time this week that Summer McIntosh was not utterly dominant achieved her Fourth Gold Medal. After racing neck-and-neck with Katie Ledecky and Lani Pallister for 15 laps, the Canadian did not have the energy remaining to finish strong as she fell to bronze-medal position.

McIntosh immediately put that aside to begin preparing for the 400 IM on the final day of competition

Shoan Ganguly finishes 28th in 400m Individual Medley

India's forgettable campaign at the Swimming World Championships came to an end with Shoan Ganguly's 28th-place finish in the men's 400m individual medley in Singapore on Sunday. The 20-year-old, who entered the meet on the back of a record-breaking swimming nationals, clocked 4:30.40s as he failed to make the eight-man final.

Ahmed Jaouadi Achieves Double Distance Gold With 1500 Triumph

The dominant force in distance swimming this year is Tunisia's Ahmed Jaouadi, the 20-year-old whose steady ascent in recent years culminated this week in Singapore. He pulled away from a pair of tough Germans to win the 800 free title, and now he has taken care of business over 30 lengths to defeat a field including two-time Olympic champion and world-record holder Bobby Finke. —*PTI*

Ninth title: Brazil beats Colombia on penalties

LONDON, 3 AUG

Six-time world player of the year Marta came off the bench to score twice, including an equaliser in stoppage time, as Brazil came from behind three times before winning the penalty shootout 5-4 against Colombia on Saturday to secure its ninth Copa America Femenina title. The 39-year-old Marta entered the match in the 82nd minute and scored in the sixth minute of stoppage time to level for Brazil at 3-3, before scoring again in extra time to put the Brazilians in front for the first time in the match. Leicy Santos scored in the 115th minute to bring Colombia back level at 4-4 as the match went to a penalty shootout. Goalkeeper Lorena Da Silva then saved two penalty kicks in the shootout to clinch Brazil's fifth title in a row at the continental championships, and beat Colombia for the fourth time in the past five finals. —*PTI*

Zverev advances to NBO Quarterfinals

RIYADH, 30 OCT

Top-seeded Alexander Zverev of Germany led Francisco Cerundolo 6-4, 1-0 when the 14th-seeded Argentine retired because of an abdominal injury Saturday night in the National Bank Open. Zverev advanced to face defending champion Alexei Popyrin of Australia in the quarterfinals. The 18th-seeded Popyrin beat fifth-seeded Holger Rune of Denmark 4-6, 6-2, 6-3 in the first night match.

Victoria Mboko stuns Coco Gauff

Coco Gauff was sent crashing out of the National Bank Open in Montreal in straight sets by Canadian teenager Victoria Mboko., The 18-year-old, ranked 85 in the world, needed just 62 minutes to beat the top seed 6-1, 6-4 and book a place in the quarter-finals., "Your support was incredible," Mboko told the crowd in French after a chorus of "Ole, Ole, Ole!" chants echoed around the venue. "I'm really happy to win today... It's incredible. I'm so happy to beat such a great champion." —*PTI*

Namdhari overpowers Indian Air Force to top Group A

KOLKATA, 3 AUG

Namdhari FC continued their winning run with a commanding 4-2 victory over the Indian Air Force football team to go on top of Group A at the 134th Durand Cup here on Sunday.

Samuel K opened the scoring for the Airmen in the 7th minute, but Namdhari responded with goals from Cledson Dasilva (penalty, 37th), Amandeep Singh (45th), and second-half strikes from Dharmpreet Singh (60th) and substitute Seilenthang Lotjem (74th) to secure all three points.Despite a late goal from Sankit in the 78th minute, the Airmen could not mount a comeback at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan (VYBK). —*PTI*

MESSI EXITS WITH INJURY

Inter rallies to beat Necaxa on penalty kicks

FORT LAUDERDALE, 3 AUG

Luis Suárez had the game-winning penalty kick, and Inter Miami rallied to beat Necaxa in the Leagues Cup on Saturday night after losing Lionel Messi to a hamstring injury in the opening minutes.

Jordi Alba had the tying goal on a header that made it 2-2 in the second minute of stoppage time to force the shootout. Inter Miami then converted all five of its penalty kicks, and goalkeeper Rocco Ríos Novo denied Tomás Badaloni in the third round of the shootout. Suárez hit the winning shot into the top left corner. Messi was injured around the eighth minute when he fell while being challenged by a pair of defenders near the penalty area. Trainers came out and worked on his right upper thigh area before he subbed out in the 11th. Miami played down a man the rest of regulation.

Lionel Messi walks off the pitch after leaving the game during a soccer match against Necaxa **PHOTO: @LEOMESSI**

Telasco Segovia put his side ahead 1-0 minute after Messi exited on a feed from Inter Miami newcomer Rodrigo De Paul, who had two assists in just his second match with the club.

It was Segovia's second goal of the tournament. Badaloni tied it at 1 on a shot that he tapped past Ríos Novo to the bottom left corner in the 33rd. Ricardo Monreal put the Mexican club ahead on what looked to be the winning score in the 81st before veteran left back Alba snapped a header into the back of the net on De Paul's free kick. —*PTI*

Want to create a culture of winning trophies: Nayar

MUMBAI, 3 AUG

Former India assistant coach Abhishek Nayar sees his new role as head coach of the Women's Premier League side UP Warriorz more as an opportunity than a challenge, as he aims to build a trophy-winning culture.

Nayar was appointed as the head coach of the franchise after a disappointing last-place finish in the WPL earlier this year, which followed their fourth-place finish in 2024 and third-place finish in the inaugural edition in 2023.

"I've always looked at anything as opportunities and this is an opportunity, which I'm very, very excited for in that regard," Nayar told PTI in an exclusive interview organised by the franchise."The opportunity is to create a culture where everyone who enters this franchise understands that this franchise plays to win trophies, and tries and bring that mentality into this franchise and our ecosystem," he said. —*PTI*